

CHARTING THE BLOGOSPHERE ■ **BUCHANAN ENDORSES?**

JUNE 7, 2004

The American Conservative



CONDUCT UNBECOMING

Inside

When They Knew

What Army Intelligence Reveals **PAGE 11**

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HOW TO LOSE FRIENDS ...

Congratulations to Christopher Layne for a lucid analysis (May 10), written from the perspective of America's own interests. The same arguments are well known—indeed were anticipated—by many who admire and like America. But when expressed, they were regarded as the anti-American complaints of left-wing pacifists.

The present U.S. policies are not only making America many enemies, they are an embarrassment to its friends.

PHILIPPE HEIN

Divonne les Bains, France

BUILD THERE CLOSE HERE

It takes gumption to make the claim we were better off with Saddam in power, but James Pinkerton makes a good case for just that (May 10). We now know Iraq was not a threat to our national security. However, we own it, and its cost so far is over \$100 billion. As we build hospitals in Iraq, we see them close in California and Texas as care for illegals drives them out of business. And this war cost more than taxpayer dollars: over 100 Americans died in April alone. Is it any wonder we negotiate with insurgents? As the guerrilla war continues, more troops will be coming home in body bags. We bought a lemon.

STEVE WUORI

East Boston, Mass.

LAST WORD

Dan Doyle's reply to Samuel Huntington (Forum, May 10) is downright laughable, and Mr. Doyle "obviously knows very little" about Protestantism and its history. The Reformers never made religion "a matter of personal taste" nor eliminated authority. They purified authority—*sola scriptura* instead of contradictory popes and councils—leading to both essential doctrinal unity

and freedom of conscience. And how naïve to say that masses for pets, gay weddings, and the like are consequences of Protestantism instead of the anti-religious 1960s counterculture. The same baneful influence plagues Catholicism with moral relativism, pedophile priests, and Catholic politicians who zealously fight for abortion—but mentioning these would ruin Mr. Doyle's one-sided anti-Protestant argument.

J.W. SMITH

via e-mail

SOUTHERN DEMOCRATS

I was both amused and dismayed by Pat Buchanan's remark, "While it would be nice if Brazil, Bangladesh, and Burundi all embraced democracy, why should we fight them if they don't...?" (May 10). I live in Brazil and can assure you that it has not only "embraced" democracy (more than 20 years ago), but it has implemented a much fairer form of democracy than the United States' crippled system. Not only is there no electoral college (thus every vote is counted and has equal weight), but Brazilians are required by law to vote and suffer considerable penalties if they do not. (For example, they can't get passports.) Moreover, all political candidates are given free television airtime to espouse their views—they are actually required to explain their positions—and election days are national holidays, meaning there's no excuse for not making it to the polls. In addition, Brazilians are quite passionate about the democratic process (perhaps because the memory of military dictatorship is so fresh in their minds): in the weeks leading up to a major election, TV and radio networks are dominated by political discussion and debate, and everywhere you turn—streets, bars, restaurants—people are vociferously proclaiming their viewpoints and defending their positions.

I don't know about Bangladesh and Burundi, but Brazil takes democracy very seriously—almost as seriously as it takes soccer.

BRIAN KNAVE

via e-mail

TO ELBA WITH HIM

President Bush's Iraq War increasingly reminds me of Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812. Napoleon assembled the strongest army ever seen and like Bush wanted to reshape a region that presented no meaningful threat to his own country. In both cases, it was a war of choice, and France and America were involved in other conflicts: Spain for Napoleon, the War on Terror for Bush. Both leaders spoke of coalition: Bush's was nonexistent, Napoleon's forced by his control of Europe. Getting to Moscow in 1812 and to Baghdad in 2003 was relatively easy, though in both cases widespread looting followed the occupiers' entrance.

Of course you'll say that Napoleon, unlike Bush, was mangled pretty severely in Borodino and Smolensk and that the tsar withdrew instead of collapsing like the Iraqi army. But a popular resistance thrived, resorting to irregular tactics that proved very costly to the occupiers. Out of some 650,000 French troops that went in, less than 60,000 made it back. And this fiasco marked the beginning of the end for Napoleon. I pray that we don't pay as high a price, but on the other hand I'm increasingly convinced and hopeful that this could be the beginning of the end of the Bush presidency.

CARLOS F. TORRES

New York, N.Y.

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[ETHICS]

For Shame

BY PAUL W. SCHROEDER What becomes of a country that loses its capacity for repulsion? Page 7

[OBSERVATION]

Whipping Up a Democracy

BY NICHOLAS VON HOFFMAN Leaving atrocity to amateurs Page 9

[DIPLOMACY]

Come Home, America

BY EUGENE GHOLZ, DARYL G. PRESS, AND HARVEY M. SAPOLSKY The Iraq failure offers an opportunity to rethink American grand strategy. Page 15

[POLITICS]

A Specter Haunts the GOP

BY TIMOTHY P. CARNEY Bush wades in to save the Republican Party from principle. Page 20

COLUMNS

6 Patrick J. Buchanan: The dilemma of populist conservatism

28 Scott McConnell: The American establishment goes AWOL.

39 Taki: Like Edsel, like Bush: brilliant presentation followed by total failure

NEWS & VIEWS

4 Fourteen Days: Faith-Based Initiative; Kerry Betrays Benedict Arnold; West Virginia Girls

19 Deep Background: Restive Republicans; The One That Got Away

ARTICLES

11 Paul Sperry: Abuse at Abu Ghraib isn't news to the Pentagon.

12 Jeffrey C. Cleveland: Blogs for beginners

22 Roger D. McGrath: Remember the real Alamo.

24 Marcus Epstein: Affirmative action gets baked.

26 Paul Moreland: A day in the life of an immigration lawyer

ARTS & LETTERS

29 Steve Sailer: Brad Pitt in "Troy"

30 Georgie Anne Geyer: *Rise of the Vulcans* by James Mann

32 James Bovard: *The Soft Cage* by Christian Parenti

34 Wayne Merry: *Soft Power* by Joseph S. Nye

36 Samuel Francis: *The Norman Podhoretz Reader* edited by Thomas L. Jeffers

[NEOCONS]

FEITH-BASED INITIATIVE

TAC attended the American Enterprise Institute's show-and-tell on the one-year anniversary of "The End of Major Combat Operations" in Iraq. The centerpiece was an address by Doug Feith, a Richard Perle acolyte and the undersecretary of defense for policy, one of half a dozen men who bear the most responsibility for the Iraq War. We had thought that the neoconservatives needed a major ideological bucking up—the news from Iraq had been uniformly bad: a Saddam general had been vetted to take over Fallujah, the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse stories were just beginning to break, the influential George Will was openly critical of neoconservatives. The Beltway's laptop warriors needed a morale infusion.

But Feith was precise, calm, hardly inspirational—disappointing to those hoping to see charisma in action. His performance inevitably (and no doubt unfairly) brought to mind Hannah Arendt's insight about the banality of evil. The man who was responsible for creating an office at the Pentagon designed to override CIA conclusions and persuade the American people that Saddam had menacing weapons of mass destruction calmly told the assembled audience, "No one can properly assert that the failure, so far, to find Iraq WMD undermines the reason for the war." Asked whether America's tight linkage to Sharon's policies made the idea of the U.S. as an agent of democratic liberation a tough sell in the Arab world, Feith (who has actually drafted position papers for Israel's Likud) blithely replied, "That's not in my lane." Hearing of Feith's answer to this question, our colleague Pat Buchanan said, "He has a sense of humor."

So soothing was the bureaucratese that we barely noticed when Feith said that in future wars, the administration



ought to consider setting up an office for postwar planning. When this little man talks about "future wars," Americans should pay attention.

[PUNDITRY]

WILL'S VENTURE

George Will's evolution as a national voice bears careful watching. Putting aside the issues on which he can seem off-key or glib, there was notable grace in his call last week for Rumsfeld to resign. He used flattery: "he [Rumsfeld] knows he failed the president. And he knows his extraordinary record of government service—few public careers, including presidential ones, can match Rumsfeld's—has been tarnished." He faces facts: "Americans are almost certainly going to die in violence made worse in Iraq, and not only there, by the substantial aid some Americans, in their torture of Iraqi prisoners, have given to our enemies in this world." He appeals to practicality: "Are the nation's efforts in the deepening global war—the world is more menacing than it was a year ago—helped or hindered by Rumsfeld's continuation as the appointed American most conspicuously identified with the conduct of the war?" And closes with more flattery: "He knows his Macbeth and will

recognize the framing of the second question: Were he to resign, would discerning people say that nothing in his public life became him like the leaving of it?" It is a seminar on column writing—and an (almost isolated) instance of the Washington conservative establishment rising to the occasion. Coupled with the significant, if lightly dropped, acknowledgement that the Bush war has made the world less secure, it is a column that does genuine service to the country.

[BUREAUCRACY]

MIAMI VICE

Number of Office of Foreign Assets Control agents assigned to investigate violations of sanctions against Cuba: 21

Number of agents assigned to cases relating to the finances of Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein: 4

[OCCUPATION]

THE AIR WAR

U.S.-sponsored Iraqi TV—it's only propaganda when someone else does it—is running into a problem. Apparently we failed to "liberate" the airwaves because satellite feeds are still making incursions: Dubai-based Al-Arabiya and Qatar's Al-Jazeera are beaming programming into our Iraq. Their live coverage of the siege of Fallujah and round-the-clock images from Abu Ghraib do little for our PR effort, which recently suffered a setback when the Iraqi editors of the Provisional Authority's newspaper walked out in protest of American control.

Our television channel, funded by a \$96 million grant, isn't faring much better. Knight Ridder's Hannah Allam notes that the American outlet provides just 40 minutes of hard news daily and is "mocked for its devotion to home improvement and sports"—though tips for painting your bombed-out house may be preferable to the current line-up. University of Michigan professor Juan

Cole reports, "I saw a program list recently, and it started off with an interview with Elie Wiesel about how he can't support the Palestinian cause because Palestinians engage in violence." It may be good news after all that only 6 percent of viewers are tuning in.

[MILITARY]

WEST VIRGINIA'S WARRIOR PRINCESSES

Both are daughters of West Virginia—and there the similarities end. One is a blonde wisp of a girl who looks more like a homecoming princess than a soldier. Others were captured with Jessica Lynch—if we knew their names, we've since forgotten—but she riveted the nation's attention. We felt a protective instinct—a sense that hers was a particular danger.

Lynndie England is a different sort of celebrity. She's the GI posing with naked Iraqis, cigarette dangling rakishly from her mouth, jovial at their torment. In one frame, she holds a leash roped round a bleeding prisoner's neck and looks proud to be counted one of the guys.

Between these two portraits comes a profound comment about women as warriors: either they are too wholesome for war's ugliness, or turn coarse to survive it. The ingénue is a misfit—for all our happy talk of equality, she could never mount a rescue to save a captured comrade. And the brute is a mutant, having traded the civilizing power of femininity for bravado ill-sized to her slight frame. Both lose—and so does the country they serve.

No one comes to war quite prepared for its horror. But the male combination of physical strength and emotional detachment makes him better suited. He blazes, she cradles. To admit as much doesn't suppress woman, it esteems her as too valuable to the social order to spend in battle or turn into some half-measure of a man.

[BELTWAY]

HUMAN WRONGS REPORT

Congress requires the State Department to report the human-rights records of foreign countries, and it typically catalogues abuses from China to Cuba with meticulous zeal. Last week, a bit of introspection was in order with "Supporting Human Rights and Democracy: The U.S. Record 2003-2004" due to land on the Hill by May 5. The day before its scheduled arrival, the State Department announced that the release had been "postponed for technical reasons." No details were given, but images of tortured Iraqis flickering across American television screens provide the most logical answer for Foggy Bottom's decision to take the Fifth.

[IMMIGRATION]

CANNON BOMBS

Grassroots Republicans continue to defy Karl Rove's expectations when it comes to liberalizing immigration policy. Rep. Chris Cannon (R-Utah), the main water-carrier for the Bush administration's guest-workers proposal in the House, failed to make it out of the state's GOP convention with enough support to avoid a primary. In the first two rounds of balloting, his opponents held him to less than 50 percent of the vote.

Now Cannon must face off against former state representative Matt Throckmorton, who has made immigration his number one issue. Cannon's strategy seems to be to run away from his own record by denying that he supports amnesty for illegal aliens. Except this is the same congressman who told an open-borders lobbying group, "We love immigrants in Utah. And we don't often times make the distinction between legal and illegal." The problem for Republicans like Cannon is that most voters do differentiate, and there is a political price to be paid for being so out of step with the party's rank-and-file. ■

The American Conservative

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Dilemma on the Right

“What magazine has published the most scathing attacks on President Bush and his Iraq invasion?” asked the *Washington Post*.

Listing the *Nation*, *Mother Jones*, the *Progressive*, and *Vanity Fair* as runners-up, the *Post* concluded, “the correct answer just might be *The American Conservative*.”

Our magazine, the *Post* added, “is a vociferous antiwar voice from the Right. It opposed the war before the invasion in March of 2003 and its opposition has escalated ever since.” Indeed, we did, but we were not alone on the Right.

Many of the syndicated columnists carried in *Conservative Chronicle*, including Robert Novak, Sam Francis, Joe Sobran, Paul Craig Roberts, and Doug Bandow opposed the invasion. As did *Chronicles*, *Middle American News*, LewRockwell.com, the website of the Mises Institute, and the conservative writers who appear regularly on Antiwar.com, America’s premier antiwar website. Moreover, scholars at Heritage and Cato were not so united in support of war as AEI. Nor is Iraq the only issue on which Bush can find Goldwater-Reagan conservatives disillusioned.

“Big Government Conservatism,” as preached by *The Weekly Standard* and practiced by Bush and Rove, with the ratcheting up of foreign aid, near doubling of the size of the U.S. Department of Education, and the \$540 billion prescription drug benefit program for seniors, has ruined the GOP’s reputation as the party of fiscal prudence.

And given the attacks on him by the Kerry-Kennedy Democrats on the issues of health and education, what has all the president’s spending availed him or his party?

Well into his fourth year, the president has yet to shut down a single agency, abolish a single Great Society program, or veto a single bill. The Clinton surpluses of the 1990s have vanished into the Bush deficits of the 21st century.

A few months back, Bush conceded to the country that he could not, and would not, enforce America’s immigration laws. He proposed an amnesty for millions of illegal aliens from Mexico. The storm of protest his amnesty ignited forced the White House to back away and the party to forget the idea for 2004. Yet, the flood of illegals caught at the border, seeking to take advantage of the Bush amnesty, has made the president vulnerable across the Southwest.

The president’s free-trade zealotry has resulted in the loss of 2.7 million manufacturing jobs in 40 months and put at risk his prospects of carrying the battleground states of West Virginia, Ohio, Michigan, and Pennsylvania. Blue-collar anger over the export of one of every six manufacturing jobs is now being supplemented by white-collar angst over the outsourcing of professional work to South Asia. As Republican faithful recite their mantra of free trade, the Reagan Democrats are drifting away.

Were a Third Party populist to get ballot position in 50 states and run on the issues—Defend Our Borders, Stop Exporting America, Bring the Boys Home—George W. Bush, like his father, would be a one-term president. He would carry less than 40 percent of the national vote.

But unlike his father, George W. Bush has no Third Party populist opponent, and when it comes to communications skills and roguish charm, John Kerry is no Bill Clinton.

Moreover, Bush has taken stands all conservatives, including this magazine, can admire. He boldly repudiated the Kyoto Protocol on global warming. He refuses to recognize any jurisdiction over U.S. soldiers or civilians by the International Criminal Court. He has nominated some first-rate judges. When several were denied a vote on the Senate floor, Bush named them as recess appointments to the U.S. appellate court. And he has consistently cut taxes.

Which brings us to the question: What course for conservatives in 2004? It is Eisenhower-Stevenson, Ford-Carter all over again. But unless one holds to the revolutionary logic of “the worse, the better,” there simply is no conservative case for Kerry.

He gave the president a blank check to go to war. He backed NAFTA, GATT, and the WTO. He supported No Child Left Behind and only protests the lack of funding. He has proposed hundreds of billions of dollars in new federal spending. He supports amnesty for illegal immigrants. And his voting record makes Teddy Kennedy the conservative Senator from Massachusetts. He is a UN Firster and a multilateralist to the core. Moreover, he has opposed virtually every weapons systems in the U.S. arsenal, and backs abortion on demand, homosexual unions, and affirmative action for minorities and women. John Kerry is arguably the most liberal member of the United States Senate.

So what does *The American Conservative* do in 2004? We await your thoughts. ■

[where's the outrage?]

For Shame

What becomes of a country that loses its capacity for repulsion?

By Paul W. Schroeder

WE ALREADY KNOW the administration's strategy for damage control on the latest erupting scandal in occupied Iraq, the abuse of Iraqi prisoners of war. The tactics have served more or less successfully, at least in America, to cover up and survive every earlier scandal and fiasco of this administration at home and abroad. President Bush has already raised his hands in holy disgust, pronouncing the actions contrary to his and the country's principles and the Army's policy, the work of a handful of miscreants whom Donald Rumsfeld solemnly promises to pursue and punish. We are already hearing the predictable excuses employed by defenders of corporate corruption, high-paid criminal athletes, and this administration—"This does not represent us or America and its values," "mistakes have been made," "no one claimed we or democracy are perfect." A few obvious culprits will be punished, a few mid-level superiors reprimanded or demoted, dangerous questions held at bay at hearings, a commission possibly named to study the problem, administrative changes promised, and then the administration, denying involvement and responsibility, will move on to other things to distract the public.

They must not get away with this.

Not only is this episode more sickening and shameful than others that have already stained the occupation of Iraq. Not only will it have an even more shat-

tering effect on America's image and ability to lead abroad. Not only does it end any surviving hopes that Americans can be seen by Iraqis and other Arabs and Muslims as liberators, models, leaders, and friends. It reveals as nothing has before the true character of this venture and of the whole policy by which this administration has chosen (allegedly) to fight terrorism and evil in the world. It ought finally to force every American, even the most loyal and patriotic, to face what this country under this leadership has done and is doing in this war. Where is it leading us?

This was not an isolated incident caused by a few bad apples, a shocking but minor and exceptional digression in an otherwise heroic and humane enterprise. This fish that now stinks to heaven began to rot long ago from the head down.

Consider when this happened—in October to December 2003, five to seven months ago. Think about how long many in the Army and outside have known about it; how long the official report investigating it has been in preparation and circulation; how long and often rumors and reports about this and other incidents of abuse of prisoners or civilians have appeared in the foreign press, especially the Arab press our authorities seek to control or repress. Yet in all this time, and to this day, all the higher officials in the Army, the Penta-

gon, and the White House responsible for policy insist they knew nothing about it. It is not a question of whether there will be a cover-up. There already has been—we are now beginning to learn the extent.

Consider why it happened—not in the superficial sense of why it was allowed to happen rather than prevented, but in the deeper and more important sense of what concrete purpose this abuse served, where it fit into what overall policy. These incidents were not simply a case of a few reservists getting their sadistic kicks or a result of indiscipline, bad chain of command, or other incidental administrative snafus. That would be bad enough and would constitute one more indictment of the incredible levity and mismanagement demonstrated by this administration in the war and occupation. Anyone who knows anything about the history of war and military occupations knows that this is precisely the sort of thing likely to happen, and that if one's goal really is liberation and winning the hearts and minds of those occupied, this kind of conduct has to be prevented at all costs.

A historical aside: in the summer of 2003, when the Iraqi insurgency was just beginning and the administration still hotly denying its existence, Donald Rumsfeld and Condoleezza Rice insisted that the problem was merely last-ditch resistance by fanatical dead-enders like

Nazi resisters in Germany in 1945. The assertion was false, of course—no civilian resistance worth mentioning developed in postwar Germany—but easily buried and forgotten under other more important administration untruths and deceptions. A different resemblance between the two occupations, however, is now dismayingly germane. By far the worst problem the Army faced in 1945 in the relations between troops and German civilians was American soldiers raping German women. The fact has gone relatively unnoticed except by historians, both because Americans at home closed their eyes to it and because it was overshadowed by far worse and vaster Soviet crimes in the Eastern Zone. Yet the Army and the Pentagon should have learned from that experience and from military history everywhere how grave the danger of this kind of conduct was.

The larger point is not, however, that they failed to prevent the abuse at Abu Ghraib prison and elsewhere. It is that they allowed and indirectly encouraged it, in pursuit of a wider and supposedly more important mission. This operation was an integral part of intelligence gathering by both military intelligence and private firms hired by the government for this purpose. The abuse was thus deliberate and purposive, intended to make prisoners psychologically ready for interrogation.

Consider further the context of that interrogation and intelligence gathering. The aim then was not simply or mainly to root out pockets of resistance and ongoing subversion or new terrorism and thereby pacify Iraq and protect American lives. This was the time when the administration was frantically bent on finding proof of the stocks of weapons of mass destruction and the alleged pre-war links to al-Qaeda that were advanced (as we now know, falsely) to justify the war. It was also part of a more massive program of detention of supposed evildoers

in Iraq, numbering 10-12,000 by different accounts, an unknown number of them still held without charge or notification to their families—a little-known story with its own cargo of abuses. It fits into the broader pattern of the so-called War on Terror in which the United States covertly and overtly supports a Gulag Archipelago of detention camps and interrogation centers over the Middle East and Central Asia, either on its own bases or on the territory of other regimes, mostly repressive ones, with whom America works.

Consider the ethos behind this massive effort, and how it characterizes and shapes the administration's entire view of the world and foreign policy. It flows seamlessly from the prevailing Ollie North or (to borrow a phrase from Professor George Lopez of Notre Dame University) Dirty Harry Callahan theory of international politics. It's a dangerous world out there; hordes of fanatical evildoers are bent on committing unspeak-

able crimes against us. If we play by the rules they despise, we will lose. We must play dirty to win, and ultimately only winning counts. The end and the unquestioned fact that we represent the forces of light and they the forces of darkness justify the means.

logical readiness to yield information they were doubtless would save their country or their fellow soldiers' lives. Consider what it means for military intelligence officers to know that their promotion and careers depend on coming up with the right stuff; for so-called civilian intelligence agents to know their paychecks and their company's contracts depend on the results, and that nobody higher up worries too much about the methods used to obtain them. Consider what it means for a general commanding a large system of prisons to be told not to obstruct this critically important job of intelligence gathering, knowing that her career is on the line.

Consider also what it says about the administration as a whole when, on top of the many previous outright lies, false promises, failed predictions, abrupt changes of course, and multiple evidences of bad or no planning, corruption, confusion, and failure that have already plagued the occupation of Iraq,

THE UNITED STATES SUPPORTS A GULAG ARCHIPELAGO OF DETENTION CAMPS AND INTERROGATION CENTERS OVER THE MIDDLE EAST AND CENTRAL ASIA.

able crimes against us. If we play by the rules they despise, we will lose. We must play dirty to win, and ultimately only winning counts. The end and the unquestioned fact that we represent the forces of light and they the forces of darkness justify the means.

Consider the incentive structure this collective mentality held at the highest level of government creates for people down the line called on to wage this kind of campaign on the ground. Consider what it means to reservists, thrown into a situation for which they are wholly untrained, to be instructed to induce in prisoners a suitable physical and psycho-

this supremely ugly scandal breaks, and no one at the highest level—not Richard Meyers or Wolfowitz or Rumsfeld or Rice or Cheney or Bush—takes responsibility, resigns, is fired, demoted, or even publicly reprimanded. In a government like that of Japan or some other countries, a sense of shame alone would suffice to bring about resignations; in an earlier era it might have meant suicide. But to this crew apply the words that brought Sen. Joe McCarthy down in 1954: "Has it come to this, at long last? Have you no shame—no shame at all?"

Consider finally what it must say about the American public, or at least a

major portion of it, if this does not at last produce an overdue and overriding sense of revulsion against leaders and a policy that have led their country to this shameful pass. The Republican slogan in 1996 was "Where's the outrage?" That outrage, understandable given the disgusting though essentially private misdeeds of President Clinton and important in the 2000 election, today seems strangely absent on the Right. Liberals can now ask conservatives, "Where's the revulsion?" What must it mean if good, loyal, religious, family-values conservatives—the segment that George W. Bush overwhelmingly commands and that this journal appeals to—find even this degrading spectacle something they can swallow? What if at least a sizeable contingent does not deliver to Bush in November the message that Oliver Cromwell addressed to the English Long Parliament in 1649: "You have been here too long for any good that you have done. In the name of God, go!"

The 19th century Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard wrote in an essay that a sign of malfunctioning of the digestive system was the inability to become nauseated or to vomit upon eating spoiled food, and that the remedy was to take an emetic. The disorder that offended him then was spiritual, the failure of Danish Lutherans to share his revulsion at a complacent established church that he believed was betraying real Christianity. His analysis and advice apply in a different way to Americans today. Anyone who does not feel revulsion against this administration for what it is doing and has done in Iraq and elsewhere has something seriously wrong with his political digestive system. ■

Paul W. Schroeder is professor emeritus of history at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is the author of The Transformation of European Politics, 1765-1848.

[forcing our hand]

Whipping Up a Democracy

Don't leave torture to amateurs

By Nicholas von Hoffman

WHEN SADDAM DID IT, they called it torture; when Americans do it they call it abuse. You might consider this a euphemism, but it's not so. There are important distinctions between torture and abuse.

Torture is functional. You trot out the rack because you are after something specific from the rackee. For example, you torture a person, preferably an old woman, to find out if she is a witch. Or you torture somebody to discourage him from clinging to erroneous and socially destabilizing opinions, such as the world is round.

This functional infliction of pain, understandable if not genteel, is permissible under the right circumstances. Thus, Saddam tortured people because he had to find out who was trying to overthrow him, who was an American spy, or who was overcharging him for making weapons of mass destruction. Roast 'em and toast 'em to get 'em to talk. Torture, pure and simple.

When you look at the pictures from Abu Ghraib, it's obvious that what was going on can't be called torture. Contemplate the pictures of PFC Lynndie England, the Army's S and M Queen, the girl with the cigarette in her mouth and the goofy smile on her face, pointing at the privates of a severely unclothed Iraqi male. That's not torture. That's fun, though fun, when carried a little too far, might be considered abuse. There's the

photo of Lynndie holding a leash attached to a dog collar around a naked prisoner's neck. That is a joke, not torture and, really, not quite even abuse. Among the many things wrong with Arabs, who have a crummy religion that we are morally obliged to clash with civilization-wise, is they often lack a sense of humor.

Torture? How so? Would anybody in his right mind get a whole bunch of men in the buff and pile them up on top of each other so they look like one of those Hindu Kama Sutra carvings if the purpose was the extraction of information? What was going on in the Abu Ghraib prison/concentration camp was strictly Bhagavad-Gita type stuff, unless the explanation for those Arabs being highly undressed is the American aversion to cover-ups. The president himself said it when he was talking to the guy from the Arab broadcasting network: "We believe in transparency."

It's ridiculous to imagine these fun and games were a "humint" operation. (Humint is Army lingo for human intelligence.) In a scrum like that, who was supposed to answer the questions? With a lot of them, it was the non-talking end that was sticking up in the air, not the orifice from which words customarily issue. So whatever was going on it was not questioning, or interrogation as the cops and CIA types say. It was not a functional occasion but a social one.

Therefore these objectionable activities cannot be classified as torture.

The president said that Arabs have got to realize that, “in a democracy everything is not perfect, that mistakes are made.” Mistakes are not crimes. The camel jockeys who have been jumping up and down in front of TV cameras and making perfect asses of themselves should cut him some slack. As David Frum, the gifted advocate of all war all the time, has so tellingly pointed out, Americans have some gripes against Iraqis, too. This is not a one-way street, fella, so who can blame us if a few of our boys and girls occasionally indulge in a little venting? Then, of course, the freedom haters get a hold of it and blow it out of proportion and the next thing the International Red Cross—can you believe it?—is claiming that they had repeatedly told big shots about high spirits at Abu Ghraib and nobody did anything to get the kids to chill out.

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“TRAINED TORTURERS.”

The truth is that reports about the hijinks at Abu Ghraib have been kicking around Washington for months and nobody said boo until they found out CBS had pictures. That got them running around with their hair on fire, as they say in the nation’s capital, but they quickly connected the dots and doused the flames after they called CBS up and told them that, if they loved their country, they would stow the photographs in the company safe. Hew! But then come Seymour Hersh and the *New Yorker* threatening to scoop CBS, so out come the pictures, and they detonate a major conflagration. There was so much spontaneous scalp combustion around

Washington it looked like the British had come back to burn the city a second time.

In an effort to put out the fires, President Bush went on Arab TV and put the incident in perspective. He said that this itty-bitty abuse “stands in stark contrast to life under Saddam Hussein. His trained torturers were never brought to justice.” The president has an incisive and very American mind which enabled him to put his finger on the difficulty, namely our lack of “trained torturers.” Americans put great stock in training: trained terrorism experts, trained Middle East experts, trained asymmetrical-war experts, and so forth. There have been loud complaints that Donald Rumsfeld has fallen down on the training aspect of the Iraqi adventure and, now it transpires, that includes a critical dearth of trained torturers that has got us into hot water, public relations-wise.

The lack of same may explain the use of “security contractors” who, one has

to suppose, coming from the private sector as they do, are experts at the work. Of course, it costs more to hire them than to have somebody on Army pay operating the thumbscrews. This additional expense is one reason that the president has had to ask Congress for extra, emergency money. If you want it done right, you don’t leave atrocities up to amateurs. Pay the premium and get quality.

Whether it was because of using unqualified people or something else, dead bodies are turning up. Granted they are Arab bodies, which Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz believes are not exactly as precious as white per-

sons’ bodies, but they’re bodies nevertheless and, if left unaccounted for, may create something of an unpleasant olfactory situation and embarrass the government. A corpse here and a corpse there and the next thing you know you’ve got Amnesty International and those other self-styled humanitarian organizations on you faster than sand flies on a dead goat in the desert.

The air is already thick with unfounded accusations and odious comparisons. At the very worst, the worst, worst, worst you can fairly say is that Abu Ghraib and other rumored concentration-camp type dormitories run by the CIA are very early Hitler; that is, Hitler before he really got started. Maybe what was going on was comparable to late Lenin but not on a scale of early Stalin, nothing like that. These are questions, however, best left to the experts.

The question we have to address is what do we do? In the public-relations department we are taking a biffing. Even though our generals insistently repeat that it’s only a few rotten apples, people are not getting it. The Iraqis are not taking to freedom as they should. Your Arab only understands force, and when we apply it to help him on down the roadmap toward democracy, we get complaints and denunciations for our trouble. We have to get somebody in there to run things who will use the force necessary to make the country a democratic model for the entire Middle East. It won’t be long before the people in charge realize that there’s one man and one man alone who can get that job done: Saddam Hussein. ■

Nicholas von Hoffman is a former columnist for the Washington Post and Point-Counterpoint commentator for CBS’s 60 Minutes. He is the author of many books including the just-released Hoax (The Nation Press, June 2004).

When They Knew

American intelligence was telling of prisoner abuse last summer.

By Paul Sperry

WHEN AMERICAN TROOPS rolled into Baghdad last April, 43 percent of Iraqis viewed them as liberators, according to a poll of 1,620 Iraqis conducted for the State Department. By October, the share had sunk to 15 percent. A whopping 67 percent of Iraqis across the country—in Sunni and Shia areas alike—instead described Americans as an occupying force. What changed?

In that period, their uninvited American guests began to mistreat them seriously—randomly locking them up and even killing them—and they did so long before the bout of homosadistic detainee abuse uncovered in the recent investigation of Abu Ghraib prison.

When the news first broke, administration officials, desperate to contain fallout from the mushrooming scandal in an election year, maintained it was an isolated incident, and as far as they knew, the mistreatment of Iraqi detainees was not systemic.

But it was widespread, involving several prisons in addition to Abu Ghraib, which holds less than 1,500 of the roughly 10,000 Iraqis detained by American forces. And not only was the problem pervasive, it's been widely known by at least Pentagon brass for almost a year as evidenced by after-action reviews written last year by U.S. Army intelligence. I obtained two of the internal Army reports, known inside the military as "lessons learned," before the Pentagon recently locked them away. (All future reviews will be classified, which I'm told is an unprecedented move.)

The first report was prepared July 1,

2003, by the Center for Army Lessons Learned in Fort Leavenworth, Kan., which cataloged the observations of a team of four Army investigators in Iraq: Lt. Col. Bob Chamberlain, Maj. Dan Pinnel, Cpt. Mike Liverpool, and Staff Sgt. Norris Whitford. They found that "detention facilities throughout Iraq were overcrowded, and there appeared to be no standard release criteria" for Iraqi detainees. "It's like the Roach Motel, 'They can check in, but they never check out!'" they observed.

One prison located at Baghdad International Airport, or BIAP, "was growing daily at an alarming rate," the report said. "The facility was built to detain 300 persons, but is currently detaining over 800 persons." The small BIAP "cage" was run mainly by contractors working for the CIA and other agencies, an Army intelligence official told me.

Many of the detainees were not even enemy suspects but merely victims of circumstance, "who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time," according to the report. Others were "randomly accused of crimes by vindictive neighbors and enemies." Yet they remained in custody.

Another U.S. prison in Tikrit, north of Baghdad, held 218 detainees even though it was built for 80, the investigators reported, and most were being held without cause. "Approximately 80 percent of the persons are unnecessarily detained and were probably just victims of circumstance," they said in the report. That figure mirrors one found in the March 3 report on the Abu Ghraib

prison, which notes that more than 60 percent of the civilian inmates there were deemed not to be a threat to society, which should have triggered their release.

"We were not winning the battle [for] the 'hearts and minds' of the Iraqi people," the team warned ominously—and as it turns out, presciently—in their July report. "Randomly detaining civilians will create future enemies of the U.S."

Those conclusions contradict contemporaneous statements made by top military officials. Just nine days after the July internal review was completed, the senior American commander in Iraq, Army Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, told reporters in Baghdad that innocent detainees "get released immediately." Pressed to provide numbers, he could not.

And Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld told a different story two months later. He said in a Sept. 16 press conference that the military police don't lock up any Iraqis they don't need to. "We let them all go," he said. "There are a group of people in Iraq that were scooped [up]. And they're in the net, but we don't want them. They're not going to go steal cars, they're not going to go become a foreign terrorist or something, and they're not Ba'athists. They're just foot soldiers," Rumsfeld said. "And we let them go. I mean, we must have let, I don't know, 8-10-12,000 of these people go."

So how did so many innocent Iraqis still wind up in jail? Another Army investigative team, deployed to Iraq in August, found one answer: bad intelligence. "Many units are targeting off of single-source,

unconfirmed reports,” they said in an internal report dated Sept. 17, 2003, and authored by Chamberlain, chief of military intelligence at the Army’s Joint Readiness Training Center. “Yes, units have to act fast, but conducting operations against the wrong targets is having an adverse effect.”

Unnecessary arrests are not the only fruit of such misguided raids. They have also led to many Iraqi civilians getting killed, Army intelligence officials say. “There’s a lot of killing of Iraqis going on over there that you don’t hear about,” said one senior intelligence official who toured some 20 Iraqi cities in the fall. “I would estimate at least a dozen a day.” At that rate, some 4,000 Iraqis can be expected to be killed each year during the planned 10-year occupation, for a combined toll of 40,000—on top of the estimated 10,914 civilians and 6,370 military already killed.

Even Iraqi journalists are being killed. In March, the Army admitted soldiers killed two Iraqi TV correspondents after mistaking them for insurgents at an Army roadblock in Baghdad. The journalists were shot several times while driving away from the roadblock. Arab reporters walked out of a press conference in Baghdad by Secretary of State Colin Powell to protest the shootings.

Alleged murders at U.S.-run prisons also are being investigated. Army investigators made a number of recommendations in their reports last year including: training and deploying more military police, human-intelligence collectors, and Arabic interpreters (many of whom are local “cab drivers” with questionable loyalties) to better screen the good guys from the bad guys and devising standard procedures for operating the Iraqi prisons.

Apparently their recommendations were not taken seriously, because this year’s Abu Ghraib report repeated the recommendations.

Administration officials from the president to the defense secretary to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs have all expressed shock over the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse scandal. President Bush said he was “shaken” by the news. Rumsfeld acted as it was the first he had heard of it and then claimed it was too early in the investigation to say if the mistreatment was systemic.

Their reaction is odd. The earlier “lessons learned” reports, starting with the summer review, essentially gave the Pentagon advance warning of an impending human-rights disaster at a number of its Iraqi detention facilities—an issue that directly influences the Iraqi people, many of whom have relatives still locked up in those facilities. And of course win-

ning hearts and minds is the key to the success of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Still, military brass did nothing to remedy the situation until it was too late.

The mistreatment of Iraqi detainees is now a full-blown scandal, complete with graphic images, played out for all the Arab world to see on Al-Jazeera. It threatens not only the administration’s already quixotic goal of bringing democracy to Iraq but also the lives of more U.S. soldiers and, as jihadists point to the abuses as further justification to attack Americans, the all-important war on terrorism itself. ■

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Tangled Web

Charting the blogosphere

By Jeffrey C. Cleveland

“THE REVOLUTION will be blogged,” reads the motto sprayed across Andrew Sullivan’s daily web journal. With similar exuberance, legions of presto-publishers, called “bloggers,” are transforming the net-surfing habits of millions of media-savvy Americans. Traditional news sites are for *old* people; the most popular new format is the weblog, or blog, an online publication organized in a diary format and produced by a single individual or small group of writers without the hassle of an editor. These publications link to other blogs, creating a spontaneous punditry network dubbed the “blogosphere,” a metaphor dreamt up by blogger William Quick

that encapsulates this network’s ambient, and sometimes gaseous, nature.

Is it the democratization of the media? Bloggers, at least in their imaginations, are throwing off the chains of oppression administered by editors and professional-media gatekeepers by providing fast-paced, opinionated interpretations of world events. A blogger’s comparative advantage stems from the ability to track news, collect links, and analyze stories in which he maintains a heightened self-interest and relative expertise.

Nobody can say just how many of these sites there are, but the Pew Internet and American Life Project estimates that between 2 and 7 percent of Internet

users maintain blogs. Most of the blogosphere consists of tiny (in terms of the scarce number of visitors) sites—blogs that take readers on a daily journey of hopes, fears, romantic interludes, updates on the health of the family dogs, etc.—intended mostly for the author's friends and relatives. A newcomer to the genre might be startled by the pages of useless, puerile content. Only a handful of blogs successfully cultivate a mass audience, yet this doesn't necessarily guarantee freedom from banality.

The default king of the blogosphere is the InstaPundit, created in 1999 by Glenn Harlan Reynolds, a law professor. Reynolds's blog receives about 100,000 visits per day and is a reasonable place to sample the blogging phenomenon, since the entire blogosphere seems to be a subset of his readers. But don't expect in-depth analysis or creative content: Glenn specializes in linking to other bloggers (Jeff Jarvis's BuzzMachine and James Lileks's The Bleat are favorites), rambling about nanotechnology, cheering on the war in Iraq, and sprinkling his short posts with references to the "InstaWife"—presumably his spouse and not an inflatable companion. Look for Glenn's posts to be laden with links and spiced up by his unique jargon, which consists almost entirely of two phrases: "Indeed" and "Read the whole thing," both references to other bloggers or articles elsewhere on the web.

InstaPundit is one of many vaguely conservative or libertarian blogs that ardently supported the war on Iraq. But the uppermost reaches of the blogosphere are not exclusively Bush country. One of the biggest blogs, with daily visits often rivaling InstaPundit, is The Daily Kos by Markos Mouitsas Zuniga. It leads the left side of the blogosphere with a steady stream of political and electoral commentary. Markos recently drew the ire of many bloggers and readers alike, however, when he dismissed the deaths

of American security contractors in Iraq with a heartfelt "Screw them." So much for liberal compassion.

Joshua Micah Marshall, at Talking Points Memo, presents a more reasonable liberal perspective. He's both an award-winning blogger (he grabbed a blog-of-the-year award from *The Week* magazine) and also a real journalist (*The Hill*, *Washington Monthly*), as reflected in his professional blogging style. His

who hit the refresh button on the web browser every five minutes? Enter "group blogs." These bring multiple intellects under a single blog, usually devoted to a common theme. Popular examples include The Volokh Conspiracy, a collection of libertarian-leaning lawyers, law professors, and economists; LewRockwell.com, a wide array of writers focused on the antiwar, pro-market message; TAPped, the blog of

IN NATIONAL REVIEW ONLINE'S THE CORNER ONE WILL FIND A LOT OF "BLEGGING"—BLOGGERS BEGGING READERS FOR RESEARCH HELP.

posts are not spontaneous, but carefully edited pieces, with some never actually making the blog cut. His meticulously crafted commentary covers politics, foreign and domestic, as well as history. He recently tossed in an interview with George Soros for a little variety. The ingredients for a successful blogging career seem obvious from the example of Marshall and Reynolds—be a lawyer, professor, or journalist able to add considerable value to news analysis.

Not that it's possible to know the background of every blogger; some remain anonymous. In a marketing coup, the blogger known only as Atrios, whose personal site is called Eschaton, has attracted considerable attention for his pithy commentaries by remaining elusive. An unabashed liberal, Atrios pulls off the gloves when attacking the conservative bloggers, often referred to as the "warbloggers" for their shameless enthusiasm for the war. Fundraising drives through Eschaton have funneled thousands of dollars to John Kerry.

After this initial tier of politically motivated blogs, the popularity of the blogosphere wanes. Why? In truth, how can one person monitor the entire news cycle and satisfy the appetites of readers

the liberal *American Prospect* magazine; and National Review Online's The Corner, where, in particular, one will find a lot of "blegging"—bloggers begging readers for research help.

Jargon proliferates in the blogosphere. Bloggers hail the advent of "permalinks," a link that connects to an exact post, not merely the main page. (In fact, status in this virtual community rides not only on the number of "hits," daily visits to the site, but being linked to.) They record the addition or subtraction of blogs from their "blogrolls," a list of other sites the blogger reads, recommends, or links. A popular pastime for warbloggers is "Fisking," the act of refuting—often line by line—the post of a rival blogger or an article from a mainstream media source. (The term refers to Robert Fisk, the outspokenly antiwar Middle East correspondent for Britain's *Independent* newspaper who is the warbloggers' Emmanuel Goldstein-figure.)

The clutter of neologisms is just one of the blogosphere's drawbacks. Although speed and simple design are a blog's foremost assets, together they lead to an organizational problem. Because the typical blog is set up in a journal format, one must scroll down

the page to play catch-up with older entries—quite a formidable task as some bloggers log 15 to 20 posts a day. Additionally, blog writers often assume that readers already know the news on which they provide commentary.

Properly speaking, most blogs are not news sources, nor can they claim to be substitutes. While InstaPundit bashes the *New York Times* and praises other bloggers for pointing out the paper's errors, the fact remains that blogging depends on the establishment media. Rarely do bloggers break a story or do much reporting. The value that a blogger adds to the news derives from his role as a docent—not of historical artifacts but of up-to-the-minute news broken by professional journalists. The more specialized knowledge that the blogger can bring to his effort, the better. A great example is the Informed Comment site run by Juan Cole, a professor of history at the University of Michigan who applies his expertise in Middle Eastern history and politics to hotspots like Iraq and Palestine. Blogs do occasionally break news: during the past couple of election cycles, blogs have reported exit

poll numbers before the major media, for example. But such instances are still relatively rare; blogs will not replace wire services—or Drudge—anytime soon.

Assimilation, rather than replacement, looks to be the order of the day. Major media outlets are scrambling to include the best features of blogs into their own services. ABC News recently launched Noted Now, a blog-like feature. And other traditional media sites are incorporating blogs, including many that were once independent, into their own online offerings. Kevin Drum sold out to the *Washington Monthly*—formerly running his own blog, Calpundit—as a permanent feature to augment the magazine's website. MSNBC publishes the blog of liberal media-critic Eric Alterman and more blog-like mumbling from Glenn Reynolds. (It remains to be seen if liberal bloggers will lament the “corporatization” of the blogosphere as they register their hate for the corporatization of war, health care, farming, mass media, and the presidency under Bush.)

Two visions appear to hold the future of the blogosphere: topical blogs and

meta-blogs. The former cast all news from a specific perspective and provide updated information on certain regions, events, or topics. James Marcus in the *Washington Post* already notes the impact of Amazon.com and blogger reviews on where readers go for literary criticism. These blogs could be aggregated into a searchable directory. In this way, the real revolution in the blogosphere comes not through the number of hits accruing to a few, popular websites, but the reliability of information collected by millions of blogs that are easily searchable.

A similar innovation is the metablog, a compilation of posts from other weblogs that tracks the currents of opinion pulsing through the blogosphere. One example is the Memeorandum site, which tracks the most “linked to” news stories of the day and lists comments from prominent bloggers on each story. Readers get the news and select from whom they wish to receive commentary and analysis—all on one website.

But, ideas and information passing from blog to blog and mind to mind don't in themselves represent a revolution. Publishing photos of your cousin's wedding with snarky comments doesn't either. There is nothing inherently special about the whizzing, whirring, blegging, and Fisking of the blogosphere. The vast amount of information must still be collected, filtered, and digested if it is to be interpreted. As such, the gatekeepers will not disappear, although they may evolve. The revolution will not be the work of the bloggers—but they will be blogging the revolution as it unfolds. ■

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Come Home, America

The Iraq War clears the deck for a new alliance strategy.

By Eugene Gholz, Daryl G. Press, and Harvey M. Sapolsky

THOUGH WIDELY SEEN as a disaster for America's alliance system, the Iraq War offers America a historic opportunity, for it exposed the extent to which America's current alliances are unhelpful and anachronistic. Now there is a temptation to heal rifts and rebuild relationships that were strained in the pre-war diplomacy. But a sober re-evaluation of their usefulness would better serve America's interest and its allies.

Our partnerships in Europe, Asia, and the Persian Gulf, once instruments of sound security policy, have been counterproductive for years. But leaders live by standard operating procedures: when confronted by new threats, they gravitate toward the familiar. Without a dramatic event, inertia prevails. Now comes overdue impetus. The bitter disagreements that flared before the Iraq War and ongoing recriminations about the current mess can give America the political energy for a critical re-assessment of our global relationships.

Consider first our partnership with Saudi Arabia. There are no stranger bedfellows. Saudi Arabia is a hereditary monarchy governed according to strict Muslim law, and it is an alleged sponsor of anti-Western terrorism. Unlike American society, which strives for openness and equality, Saudi society grants full rights to very few, with especially tight restrictions on women.

It is no secret that the U.S.-Saudi relationship is a marriage of convenience—the core being a shared fear that Saddam's Iraq would invade Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and capture their substantial oil reserves.

Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait drew the United States and Saudi Arabia together. Saudi rulers knew that their military was as powerless to stop Saddam as the Kuwaitis had been, so they asked the United States to protect them. But Desert Storm did not eliminate the threat; it drove Iraq from Kuwait but left an angry Saddam Hussein to stew in Baghdad and plot his revenge. The Saudis understood that they were still in

shocks, whose costs would fall disproportionately on the oil-hungry United States. Even though the U.S. gets most of its imported oil from the Western hemisphere, worldwide oil sells for one price, so Saddam would have gained leverage even against a superpower. The United States could not take that risk.

But containing Iraq came with great costs. The indefinite deployment of U.S. troops in the Saudi kingdom enraged Muslim extremists, who wanted to drive the "Crusader forces" away from Mecca and Medina. Bin Laden's 1996 "Declaration of War" proclaimed that al-Qaeda would fight against "the Americans occupying the land of the two holy

THE **SANCTIONS ON IRAQ**, A KEY PART OF CONTAINMENT, **FUELED MUSLIM ANGER** AROUND THE WORLD AND **FED THE RECRUITMENT POOL FOR AL-QAEDA**.

danger, so they took the momentous step of inviting the United States to establish an indefinite military presence in the heart of the Islamic kingdom.

From the American perspective, containing Saddam was a sound strategic move. If Saddam had grabbed Kuwaiti and Saudi oil fields, he would have amassed a dangerous amount of market power and with it the ability to create oil

places" and vowed to "expel the infidels from the Arab Peninsula." That rage found its outlet in the September 11 attacks.

The containment policy had other pernicious effects: the sanctions on Iraq, a key part of containment, fueled Muslim anger around the world and fed the recruitment pool for al-Qaeda. Saddam manipulated the "oil for food program"

by distributing pharmaceuticals and food to his supporters and denying them to regime opponents. He blamed the suffering in Iraq on the United States, and claimed that sanctions were killing hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children. Thousands of Muslims around the world believed this “blood lie,” and many of them contributed to charities that turned out to support terrorism. Even worse, thousands of Muslims, educated in fundamentalist religious schools poisoned with anti-American rhetoric, joined groups linked to al-Qaeda.

BREAKING WITH THE AMERICANS WOULD HAVE REQUIRED A MAJOR INCREASE IN EUROPEAN DEFENSE SPENDING, AND EUROPEAN POLITICIANS WERE NEVER WILLING TO TAKE THAT STEP.

The presence in Saudi Arabia of American troops—those infidels who were supposedly killing children—weakened the legitimacy of the Saudi monarchy at home and strengthened the hand of Saudi anti-Western extremists. Fundamentalist clerics and al-Qaeda leaders dubbed the American soldiers in Saudi Arabia “conquering Crusaders” and rallied religious-backed opposition to the House of Saud. Faced with domestic unrest, the Saudi government made deals with the extremists; they paid them large sums of money and allowed them to control state-supported religious schools.

Now that Iraq has been conquered, the United States can redefine its relationship with Saudi Arabia. In fact, this has begun: even before President Bush declared that major combat was over in Iraq, he quietly announced that American forces were leaving Saudi Arabia. The Iraq War thus allowed the United States to undercut al-Qaeda’s recruitment by

eliminating two of its most powerful symbols: Christian soldiers protecting the holy mosques and Muslim children being killed by American bombs and sanctions. But the United States could go a step further.

In the 1990s, the United States was so fixated on containing Saddam that the Saudis could ignore American complaints about links between the Saudi princes, hard-line clerics preaching hatred of the West, and terrorists. The Saudis even hindered the American investigation of the Khobar Towers bombing—presumably

out of fear that a thorough investigation of extremist groups in the kingdom would turn up embarrassing evidence of Saudi links to terrorism. The U.S. simply had no leverage.

No longer. The United States does not need Saudi bases to keep the region’s oil divided because there is no Saddam to seize it all. And the House of Saud no longer has a good excuse for being soft on terrorism: the “Crusaders” are out of the kingdom. So there is no longer any reason for the United States to make an exception to its general policy in the War on Terror. We can send the Saudis the same message that we passed to Iran, Sudan, and others who used to allow al-Qaeda to recruit and plan: continue at your peril.

The Iraq War created a second key opportunity for the United States: it exposed the growing fault-lines within NATO. Americans and Europeans have reflexively begun to smooth out hard feelings and reiterate the enduring

strength of the alliance. Instead, we should use the dispute over Iraq policy as an opportunity to address NATO’s fundamental contradictions and to reconsider its continued relevance.

The NATO framework once made sense. During the Cold War it was a vital national interest—for both the West Europeans and the Americans—to keep non-Communist Europe out of Soviet clutches. The Western Europeans were initially too weak to counter Soviet power alone, so the United States deployed troops to the continent to keep the Soviets at bay.

Over time, tensions arose among the NATO allies. Europeans began to view American-style containment as brash and militant. They feared that American aggressiveness and miscalculation would trigger war across Europe. At the same time, they had learned to enjoy their cheap ride on the U.S. security effort. They complained about America’s war in Vietnam, promises to build ballistic missile defenses, and talk of an evil empire, but in the end there were only shrugs and acquiescence. Breaking with the Americans would have required a major increase in European defense spending, and European politicians were never willing to take that step.

The United States grew frustrated with NATO too. The Europeans never carried much of the alliance’s military burden, preferring to use their taxes for domestic subsidies and social-welfare programs. Americans thought of the Europeans as overly legalistic, with strong inclinations toward pacifism and appeasement. But through it all, the United States was willing to bear the heavy defense burden because the potential loss of Europe was too terrible to risk. Furthermore, the American military happily used the Europeans’ lackadaisical efforts to justify America’s forward deployment and large defense budgets. So the alliance held firm.

Today, the NATO alliance makes little sense for the United States. The argument that Europe needs America's security help, already dubious by the end of the Cold War, is now absurd. Europe has never been so free or so secure. Of course Europe still faces threats, but 450 million Europeans, with a combined economy about as large as America's, can clearly handle those challenges without transatlantic assistance. Europe's poor performance in the former Yugoslavia prior to American intervention showed Europe's lack of will, not an inherent lack of capability.

NATO is actually worse than unnecessary; it breeds transatlantic resentment, for it creates unrealistic expectations on both sides of the ocean. Americans expect the Europeans to be "loyal allies" and support U.S. policies because America defends them, while Europeans demand a say in important U.S. foreign-policy choices because, after all, they are partners. Neither is a fair expectation. America should not expect Europe to march in step, and Europeans should not expect a say in America's decisions unless they are willing to share the costs and risks equally. American and British, not French and German, troops would have died if Saddam had attacked Kuwait a second time. The continentals, in essence, want representation without taxation.

The resentment caused by NATO's inequalities also threatens to undercut an important benefit of healthy transatlantic relations: economic co-operation. A more civilized diplomacy born of a rebalanced security relationship would allow flourishing commerce to benefit consumers and producers on both sides of the Atlantic.

The Europeans may appear to be taking the initiative in changing the relationship; there is much discussion in Europe about gaining security independence from the United States. But so

far only France has increased its defense budget; the other European nations have not followed suit, and several have actually cut military spending. Few Europeans seem ready to trade café life for barracks life. Their governments know this and act accordingly.

But change could still come from the American side. It is now clear that the United States needs a smoother economic and diplomatic relationship not colored by resentment and unrealistic expectations. Yet some American pundits still resist updating the relationship. Defenders of the old transatlantic alliance confuse ends and means. NATO is an instrument that in the past served a goal that was vital: defending a major center of geopolitical power from hostile influence. It had the important additional benefit of maintaining friendly, co-operative ties. But unfortunately the instrument is now getting in the way of good relations.

Comedian Jerry Seinfeld once observed that ending a relationship is like tipping over a Coke machine: it cannot be toppled with one shove but

assistance, many Asian allies agreed, but they proved to have remarkably little military capability. Small contingents from Australia and the Philippines served in Operation Iraqi Freedom, and small Thai and Korean forces have contributed to post-war stabilization efforts. But the American ally in Asia with substantial military power, Japan, offered only symbolic support.

For more than a decade, American strategic planners have known that their Asian allies do not actually need the assistance that the United States generously provides. But the revelation that the allies are too weak or too unwilling to help America—along with the rising demands on America's own force structure for the occupation of Iraq—may overcome the inertia that has sustained America's Cold War alliances in Asia.

The Japanese humanitarian intervention in Iraq is a microcosm of the U.S.-Japan alliance, and it provides an example of the sort of problems for the United States built into the broader Asian security environment. After great hand-wringing, Japan finally

THE JAPANESE PEACEKEEPERS ARE ACTUALLY A MILITARY LIABILITY: IF THEY ARE ATTACKED, THEY EXPECT THE NEARBY BRITISH CONTINGENT TO SHOW UP WITH REAL FIREPOWER TO RESCUE THEM.

must be rocked back and forth before it will fall. By exposing contradictions and resentments, the Iraq War may create space for a new relationship with more realistic expectations.

NATO is not the only alliance overdue for re-evaluation, for while the pre-war diplomacy between the U.S. and its Asian allies appeared polite and co-operative compared to the transatlantic rancor, but it was still revealing and disappointing. When America asked for

agreed to send a few hundred lightly armed peacekeepers to help stabilize a relatively quiet sector of southern Iraq. But the Japanese peacekeepers are actually a military liability: if they are attacked, they expect the nearby British contingent to show up with real firepower to rescue them. If nearby international forces are attacked, however, the Japanese are required by their "rules of engagement" to sit on their hands.

The United States now has an opportunity to withdraw its troops from Asia to force its allies to take responsibility for their own defense needs. They have the latent power resources; all that they lack is the will. Currently 32,000 American soldiers defend the South Koreans from a country with about one-thirtieth of their economy and less than half their population. The South Koreans may need to remain under the U.S. nuclear umbrella to neutralize North Korean nuclear threats, but the notion that U.S.

Closer to the front, the United States announced last fall that American forces in Korea could stand back from the demilitarized zone; now, there are hints that major elements of the Second Infantry Division, the bulwark of the U.S. ground force in South Korea, are also in line for deployment to Iraq.

But pulling American forces out of Asia, particularly away from Korea, is only a half step toward a rational Asian alliance system because the United States still has a legally binding defense

and triggered heady talk about American power and destiny. If there is a silver lining to the current difficulties in Iraq, it is that ill-considered notions of empire will now likely be abandoned.

In both Afghanistan and Iraq, the U.S. discovered that removing an offending regime is far easier than replacing it. Although many Afghans and Iraqis welcomed the destruction of their despotic governments, forging agreements about the shape of constitutions and new governments has been difficult.

Talk of empire has also been deflated by another reality: the U.S. military does not have enough manpower to maintain large contingents in Afghanistan and Iraq. The mission in Iraq in particular has forced the United States to draw heavily on its military reserves, including National Guard units. But American reservists expect time limits on hardship and dangerous deployments. Long overseas tours and family separations take a toll. Already the military is offering increased enlistment bonuses and issuing unusual "stop loss" orders to prevent the departure of personnel with crucial skills. Few Americans will volunteer to patrol hostile, far-off lands, and even fewer will join the reserves if that kind of duty is likely.

Efforts to train new Afghan and Iraqi police and soldiers will not relieve much of this burden. No matter how quickly the U.S. troops are replaced by indigenous forces, the ultimate responsibility for Afghan and Iraqi stability will remain American for a long time to come. Having destroyed the previous regimes and shaped the successors in these countries, the United States is the *de facto* guarantor of Afghan and Iraqi security. A substantial American overseas presence backed up by suitable reserves at home will be required for years.

America's military manpower problem seems likely to quell once-easy talk about pre-emptive strikes against North

IF THERE IS A **SILVER LINING** TO THE CURRENT DIFFICULTIES IN IRAQ, IT IS THAT **ILL-CONSIDERED NOTIONS OF EMPIRE** WILL NOW LIKELY BE **ABANDONED**.

soldiers are needed to defend the South strains credulity. Similarly, American forces still defend Japan—nearly 40,000 U.S. troops are stationed there—even though Japan has the biggest economy in East Asia and the most powerful defense force in the region.

Military threats in Asia have been exaggerated for decades to justify a large post-Cold War American military. The North Korean army—which envies the equipment and training of the Iraqi Republican Guard—has been described in absurdly flattering terms. And upward trends in Chinese power, which suggest that China will enter the Great Power ranks in a couple of decades, are not yet realized. Politicians, pundits, and the public are led to believe that China is far more powerful today than it actually is.

In the aftermath of the Iraq War, the truth about that exaggeration is starting to come out. As soon as the United States realized that it needed the Marines regularly stationed in Okinawa for a rotation in Iraq, the dubious argument that they were critical for South Korea's defense was quickly forgotten. They went to Baghdad.

commitment to South Korea. That treaty obligation and regular public declarations about its continued relevance threaten to stunt South Korea's political maturation. The United States needs to proclaim loud and clear that South Korea can and should do more for its own defense.

The final opportunity the Iraq War offers is even more sweeping than the others. The continuing difficulties of Iraqi reconstruction present the United States with a chance to re-learn important lessons about the limits of American power and the difficulties of nation-building without suffering a serious military disaster.

These lessons should have been learned in Vietnam. The exuberance that America felt in the early 1960s to "bear any burden" and slay Communist dragons everywhere was only slaked after an awful war that demoralized the American military, divided American society, and claimed more than 50,000 American lives. But near-costless victories over Iraq in 1991, Serbia in 1999, and the Taliban in 2001 rekindled this exuberance

Korea, Iran, and Syria. The strange idea expressed by some that America should bring democracy to the Middle East, by the sword if necessary, is fading. The ambition to manage a global empire to fulfill altruistic dreams has succumbed to the very real and very difficult problems of pacification and nation-building.

America can choose to ignore the lessons of Afghanistan and Iraq—let inertia prevail and opportunity pass. We can decide to remain cozy with Saudi leaders, even as they violate our values and support our enemies. We can patch up hurt feelings on both sides of the Atlantic so NATO can plod ahead unchanged. We can protect South Korea indefinitely and continue to treat the Japanese like unreliable partners entrusted with no real global responsibilities. And finally, we can embrace the lure of empire and greater military activism abroad. But in the rubble of war lies an opening: we can correct errors in all these areas and change the course of U.S. foreign policy.

The struggle to destroy bin Laden's terror organization is not over. America will need to remain vigilant for decades to ensure that al-Qaeda does not re-emerge in Afghanistan or take root in the chaos of post-war Iraq. The resources for that task can be found in our garisons in Europe and Asia, kept there too long after the Cold War. That struggle, along with its aging alliances, is history. The future of American foreign policy is the road home. ■

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The Bush White House is under pressure from Republican congressmen as well as a number of Senate moderates,

because the situation in Iraq is increasingly affecting overall Republican prospects in the November elections. At the end of April, a delegation visited President Bush's chief political advisor Karl Rove and urged that the White House take decisive action against Defense Department officials responsible for the lack of pre-war planning for Iraq and for a series of well-documented missteps in occupation policy. They cited errors like the original disbanding of the Iraqi army, the failure to reach accommodation with the Shi'ite leadership, and the inability to deal with the surge in Iraqi Sunni resistance. The Republicans stated their belief that President Bush remains extremely popular but stressed that some of his senior-level officials responsible for Iraq policy are receiving very high negatives from local and state-level constituencies. The evidence of widespread prisoner abuse at American-run prisons in Iraq and Afghanistan was not on the agenda for the discussions but is likely further to increase negative perceptions of the Defense Department. Rove told the Republican delegation that the president recognized there had been failures but was determined to rectify mistakes and stay the course and ensure security during and after the transition to Iraqi rule. Rove did concede, however, that the president would make some changes in his Defense policy team before November, including the early departure of Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz. Although not mentioned by Rove at the meeting, a knowledgeable White House source added that the Undersecretary of Policy at the Defense Department Douglas Feith will soon be asked to resign. Feith is the Defense official directly responsible for pre-war planning in Iraq.



Israel's foreign intelligence service Mossad has failed in a second assassination attempt against the overall Hamas leader, Khalid Meshal.

Meshal lives under Syrian protection in Damascus. Five Yemeni Jews were dressed as local Syrian Muslims and infiltrated into Damascus by way of Jordan. They sought to attend a ceremony at the Yarmuk refugee camp in Damascus where Meshal was commemorating Abdel Aziz Rantisi, the Hamas leader who had been assassinated two weeks earlier in Gaza. The five men were apprehended by Meshal's security guards and handed over to the Syrian intelligence service. Apparently, under torture the men confessed they had entered Syria on a Mossad-directed mission to kill Meshal. This was the second failed attempt to assassinate Meshal. During the prime ministership of Binyamin Netanyahu, Mossad agents were able to inject Meshal with poison. Meshal, living in Jordan at the time, became an international cause célèbre when former King Hussein announced that the Mossad agents would be executed if the antidote were not sent to Jordan within 48 hours. Meshal's life was saved after an Israeli doctor delivered the antidote. The affair was a huge embarrassment for Netanyahu and the latest failed attempt might become be an additional embarrassment for current Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who authorized the Mossad attempt. Sharon has vowed to kill all of the Hamas leadership. ■

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A Specter Haunts the GOP

Bush wades in to save the Republican Party from principle.

By Timothy P. Carney

ARLEN SPECTER—who has cast more liberal votes than any other Republican in the Senate—was saved by President George W. Bush and Sen. Rick Santorum last month.

Specter, a four-term incumbent, edged out conservative Rep. Pat Toomey (R-Pa.) by fewer than 13,000 votes out of more than one million cast in the Republican Senate primary. In the final push, he relied on over \$300,000 from the National Republican Senatorial Committee, recorded phone calls from President Bush broadcast to the middle of the state, an 11th-hour fly-around with Santorum, and a final-week fundraiser with President Bush. If not for this tireless work by these so-called conservative leaders, Specter would have lost badly.

Rank-and-file conservatives are not happy. When Santorum addressed the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast in Washington the day after the primary, some walked out. In closed-door meetings around Washington, Bush's liaisons were pummeled with angry questions in the days after Toomey's defeat at Bush's hands. Conservatives who have watched Specter shrink tax cuts, battle against school choice, kill tort reform, defend abortion, and invent the art of "Borking" conservative judges that has poisoned Capitol Hill wanted to know why Bush and Santorum did it.

The answer does not rest in mere political expediency, but in the vision Bush and the GOP establishment have for the future of the party—specifically

the role of cultural issues and the make-up of the courts.

The conventional wisdom says Bush and Santorum went to bat for Specter because party politics demand the establishment back the incumbent. But consider the GOP's treatment of conservative former Sen. Bob Smith (R-N.H.). Smith in 2002, like Specter this year, faced a primary challenge. He had the official endorsement of the White House and the RNC. Karl Rove even made an appearance with him. But Smith's primary opponent, Rep. John Sununu, also had some clout on his side.

On April 17, 2002, Sununu held a fundraiser, headlined by Conference Chairman Santorum, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, and Senators Ted Stevens (now the senior Republican in that body) and Kit Bond. Had Specter received the Bob Smith treatment, Pat Toomey would be the Senate nominee.

Concern over control of the Senate also cannot explain Bush's and Santorum's work for Specter. Even granting that Toomey would be more vulnerable than Specter in November, Democrats would not realistically be in striking range of 51 seats. With Pennsylvania in play, Democrats would still need to win eight of 10 competitive Senate races to gain a majority. Bush and Santorum battled for Specter for more subtle reasons.

More than a few grassroots Pennsylvania Republicans explained their votes for Specter as votes to help Bush in

November. Having Specter on the ballot in November, the media and the Specter campaign had told them, would help Bush win Pennsylvania. While widespread, this perception is false, and it doesn't fully explain why the White House backed Specter so forcefully.

Wouldn't the White House want Toomey on the ballot to help turn out Pennsylvania's share of those four million Christian conservatives who Karl Rove says stayed home in 2000 (as well as those right-wingers less than pleased with Medicare expansion and empire-building)?

With 445,000 more Democrats than Republicans in Pennsylvania, Specter backers point out that a Republican needs Democratic votes to win the Keystone State, regardless of conservative turnout. But which kind of Democrats does Bush want to court?

In the 2002 Democratic gubernatorial primary, more than 702,000 Democrats voted for former Philadelphia Mayor Ed Rendell, while state Auditor Bob Casey, Jr. pulled in a little less than 540,000. Rendell is a friend of Bill Clinton and pro-choice. Casey is pro-life and the son of the former governor who tried to overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

Outside of Philadelphia, Rendell lost nearly every county but won big in the "collar counties" of Montgomery, Bucks, and Delaware. In these white-bread, upper-middle-class, socially liberal suburbs, thousands of Republicans reregistered as Democrats so that they could

have a say in the primary—and ensure the November election would not be a battle between two pro-lifers.

This year Specter convinced those same suburban voters to switch back to the GOP. In these counties, the Bush campaign deployed its turnout machine for Specter last month. It is here that Specter won, and here that Bush thinks he can win in November.

Meanwhile in York County, one Democrat busted past the Republican poll workers standing outside on April 27, explaining that she was unpersuadable: “I’m a Democrat—ultra conservative and pro-life.” She was a Casey Democrat, and there are half of a million like her in Pennsylvania.

The Bush campaign has decided they feel more comfortable pursuing Rendell Democrats than Casey Democrats. They would rather try to win on tax cuts and education spending than on abortion and gay marriage. Bush-Cheney would

whose job it is to get Bush’s judges confirmed. Some Republican Senators on the committee have privately expressed concern over that prospect.

Why should Bush’s dream for the Judiciary Committee be his allies’ nightmare?

When wishful thinking strikes, some conservative trench-warriors in the judge battle tell themselves that Bush has struck some sort of deal with Specter. Now that Bush has saved Specter’s hind, he is obligated to go to the mat for Bush’s nominees, including any impending Supreme Court picks.

Specter’s history with judges makes this scenario unbelievable. Specter famously delivered the “game-winning RBI” in the smear campaign to sink Robert Bork, Ronald Reagan’s conservative nominee to the high court. Specter also sank two other GOP nominees but not a single Democratic pick. In his memoirs, Specter blames Bork’s “narrow”

performance on education, where he cheerfully signed a bill that looked nothing like his original plan, is to be any guide, the president considers a Pyrrhic victory on Capitol Hill to be a victory all the same.

Perhaps Bush is happy to go along with Specter’s type of judges for the high court and then call that a breakthrough victory in the nomination battle.

An even less charitable interpretation of Bush’s push for Chairman Specter is that Bush wants another Anthony Kennedy. Another Scalia or two could overturn *Roe* and suddenly return the abortion issue to the elected branches of government. The ensuing mayhem would disturb the political *status quo* that has served the Bushes and their allies so well.

With Specter wielding the gavel, on the other hand, the administration has a ready-made excuse for capitulation. If Bush in his second term nominates Alberto Gonzales to the Supreme Court, the White House can send its liaisons to angry conservatives to say that political necessity—Specter as chairman—demanded a moderate pick.

Bob Smith’s actions—leaving the GOP for a few weeks—were unacceptable to the party establishment. Specter’s deeds—assaulting Bush’s tax cuts and in effect saving *Roe v. Wade*—fall short of the definition of disloyalty. Smith left the party out of disgust for its lack of fealty to its alleged principles. But from the viewpoint of the party leaders, Smith was the worst sort of Republican: a conservative purist.

Pat Toomey’s flaw was similar. Smith and Toomey are a threat to the party’s establishment because they would have the party stand for something. For now, Bush has saved the Republican Party from that fate. ■

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SPECTER’S DEEDS—ASSAULTING BUSH’S TAX CUTS AND IN EFFECT SAVING *ROE V. WADE*—FALL SHORT OF THE DEFINITION OF DISLOYALTY.

rather not fight a culture war if they don’t have to. For the battle they want to wage, Specter truly is an ideal sidekick.

On Dec. 2, 2003, Bush said of Specter, “I look forward to working with him as the chairman of the Judiciary Committee in the United States Senate to make sure my judges get through and get appointed.” Specter is third in seniority on the Judiciary panel, which has control over judges and abortion law among other issues. Because of GOP rules and term-limits, Specter will become chairman next year if he is re-elected and the GOP keeps the majority.

The thought of Chairman Specter terrifies Republican committee staffers and think-tank and interest-group directors

view of the Constitution and his refusal to see it as a “living, growing document.” Specter also expresses some buyer’s remorse for his support of Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas and Chief Justice William Rehnquist. Specter has no second thoughts about his backing of liberals Sandra Day O’Connor, Stephen Breyer, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and David Souter. While Specter repeatedly points out that he has voted for every Bush nominee so far, he has reportedly worked behind the scenes to stall the court nomination of conservative Leon Holmes.

More likely is that Bush simply has a different vision for the Supreme Court than conservative activists do. If Bush’s

In Search of Rawhide Heroes

Hollywood can't stomach the kind of men who won the West.

By Roger D. McGrath

WHEN ORSON WELLES was asked to identify the great directors who inspired him, he replied simply, "The old masters. By which I mean John Ford, John Ford, and John Ford." Watching the characterization of David Crockett in the recent film "The Alamo" reminds me that John Ford is not around to do it right. Hollywood can no longer fathom, let alone accept, the character of the people on the American frontier and the spirit that animated their times. There are occasional exceptions, but for the most part Hollywood has lost the ability to empathize with those bold and adventurous Americans who pushed the frontier westward from the Appalachians to the Pacific Coast.

The very essence of the Scotch-Irish frontiersman David Crockett has been twisted and distorted in his latest movie incarnation. He suffers from some kind of modern angst, is full of self-doubt, tortured by his past, and bedeviled by his image. This is not a man who would inspire the loyalty and courage of those around him, as did the real Crockett. Moreover, the movie suggests that Crockett really never did much of anything, that he was a creation of early-day mythmakers, especially James Kirke Paulding, who wrote the "Lion of the West," a play about a fictional character named Nimrod Wildfire.

For modern Hollywood, the strong and iron-willed Crockett must have been the creation of writers and thespians—and that is how he is portrayed. The reality of having to live up to his

image is the theme that animates "The Alamo's" Crockett. When Crockett learns that the war is not over and that he will actually have to defend the Alamo, he is stunned. Shock and fear are written all over his face before he recovers his composure. What do the screenwriters and director want us to believe—that Crockett was a Sylvester Stallone or an Arnold Schwarzenegger who had been suddenly called upon to do the real thing? David Crockett had been doing the real thing all his life.

At one point Jim Bowie tells Crockett that "those are not bears out there" as if Crockett had never fought anything that shot back. The movie does eventually reveal that Crockett fought the Red Stick Creeks in the War of 1812 but distorts his participation beyond recognition. "I wasn't ever in but one real scrape in my life," says Crockett as he begins a gripping soliloquy. He then describes the battle at Tallusahatchee as if it consisted only of Indian men, women, and children crowding into a cabin for protection and pleading for mercy. "They wanted to surrender," says Crockett, "but this squaw loosed an arrow and killed one of the fellas, so we shot her and thenThen, we set fire to the cabin. We could hear 'em screaming to their gods in there. We could smell 'em."

There was a bit more to the fight, although to describe it and to explain why the Tennessee boys were in a fight with the Red Sticks would interfere with one of modern Hollywood's favorite themes: evil white man versus noble red

man. At Tallusahatchee were dozens of cabins and some 200 well-armed Red Stick Creek warriors. Hoping for surprise, the Tennessee militia cavalry approached the village shortly after sunrise but the Indians, said Brig. Gen. John Coffee, the cavalry commander, "began to prepare for action, which was announced by the beating of drums, mingled with yells and war whoops." Coffee had his volunteers encircle the village and then sent a portion of his force in a feint at the center cabins. The Red Stick warriors, not knowing the strength of the whites, thought they could overwhelm the small force before them and charged. The Tennessee boys fired once and retreated, with the Indians whooping and pursuing. The trap sprung, Coffee's main force swiftly closed on the surprised warriors who raced for their cabins.

"The enemy fought with savage fury," said Coffee in an after-action report, "and met death with all its horrors, without shrinking or complaining: not one asked to be spared, but fought as long as they could stand or sit. In consequence of their flying to their houses and mixing with the families, our men, in killing the males, without intention, killed and wounded a few of the squaws and children." For those cynics who think that Coffee might have written a disingenuous report, they will have a difficult time explaining the 84 women and children taken prisoner. One of the children, a ten-month old boy orphaned by the fight, was about to be killed by squaws

when the troops intervened. He was carried to Andrew Jackson, the commander of the Tennessee militia, who took him into his tent and coaxed him to drink a mixture of brown sugar and water. The boy became Andrew Jackson Jr.

No such concern was demonstrated when the Red Stick Creeks attacked Ft. Mims and slaughtered some 200 women and children—the massacre that roused Crockett and other Tennessee frontiersmen to volunteer for service in the militia. At Ft. Mims—not much more than a palisade of logs around the homestead of Samuel Mims—the “fearful shrieks of women and children put to death in ways as horrible as Indian barbarity could invent” could be heard a half-mile off. The Creeks grabbed small children by the ankles and, swinging them through the air, dashed their brains out on logs. They split open the bellies of pregnant women and, while the women were still alive, ripped out their fetuses. Men, women, and children were scalped and dismembered. A gripping soliloquy about this horrific slaughter was missing from “The Alamo.”

Tallusahatchee was not Crockett’s “only real scrape.” A week later he was at Talladega when more than a thousand Creek warriors came rushing out of the woods “like a cloud of Egyptian locusts, and screaming like all the young devils had been turned loose, with the old devil of all at their head,” said the real Crockett. When the furious fight ended, 300 Red Stick warriors lay dead on the battlefield and dozens of others were probably dying elsewhere. Fifteen of the Tennessee boys died in the battle, and more died later of their wounds. Crockett would continue to fight in the war with the Red Sticks and in the Seminole campaign that followed, serving two three-month enlistments and rising from private to sergeant.

Not only are Crockett’s accomplishments denigrated or omitted in the movie, but there is a sad and melancholy

air that surrounds Crockett, unlike his real counterpart who wrote that Texas “is the garden spot of the world. The best land and best prospects for health I ever saw, and I do believe it is a fortune to any man to come here.” “The Alamo’s” Crockett is generally so downcast that Santa Ana’s troops would not have needed to kill him—he would have committed suicide. He seems enveloped by ennui, lacking energy and vitality, although he briefly comes alive in a great fiddling scene—Crockett was an accomplished fiddler and played often during the 13 days of the siege—that provided a rare inspirational moment. The real Crockett provided many for those who served with him and was forceful and energetic. “The Hon. David Crockett was seen at all points,” wrote William Travis after a battle during the siege, “animating the men to do their duty.”

The director of “The Alamo,” John Lee Hancock, said that he would make certain that his Crockett did not remind

shoulder his ever faithful rifle.” Susannah Dickerson (often misspelled Dickinson), a survivor of the Battle of the Alamo, said she “recognized Col. Crockett lying dead and mutilated between the church and the two story barrack building ... his peculiar cap by his side.”

Although it is not known for certain how Crockett died, “The Alamo” has him captured and executed—the death favored by revisionist historians. These historians base their claim on the so-called diary of a Mexican officer, Jose Enrique de la Peña, who fought at the Alamo. There is a problem with the “diary,” however. It is evidently a modern forgery, most likely the work of a prolific producer of fraudulent documents, John Laffin. Because of a number of anachronisms that the document contains, even the revisionists are now admitting that the document could not be a diary and are calling it a memoir constructed by Peña some years after the battle. Dan Gagliasso, a director of documentaries for the History and Discovery channels

THE ALAMO’S CROCKETT IS GENERALLY SO DOWNCAST THAT SANTA ANA’S TROOPS WOULD NOT HAVE NEEDED TO KILL HIM—HE WOULD HAVE COMMITTED SUICIDE.

anyone of John Wayne’s Crockett. He succeeded wildly. While Wayne’s Crockett looked like a caricature of John Wayne at times and was given to stilted speechifying (Wayne made the mistake of directing himself), he was someone you would not want to fight and someone men would follow. Hancock does not even have his Crockett don buckskin, and Crockett’s trademark coon-skin cap is nowhere to be seen. Yet, those who saw Crockett depart for Texas all describe him in his regular garb. “He wore that same veritable coon-skin cap and hunting shirt,” said James Davis, who saw Crockett board a ferry at Memphis, “bearing upon his

and a researcher for director and screenwriter John Milius, told me that the University of Texas, which owns the Peña manuscript, would not allow the document’s ink or paper to be tested for an episode of *Unsolved History*. Not by accident, Hollywood sides with the revisionists—allowing Crockett to look less heroic.

Someday, Hollywood may again come to understand and appreciate the men and women who peopled the frontier. Until then, I will miss John Ford. ■

Roger D. McGrath is a historian in California and the author of Gunfighters, Highwaymen and Vigilantes.

No Cookies for Conservatives

Students get creative to fight race quotas on campus.

By Marcus Epstein

WHEN CONSERVATIVES have the temerity to question whether a urine-immersed crucifix should be subsidized with taxpayer funds, they are accused of being humorless censors. When the Left is faced with ideas that make them uncomfortable, however, they are the first to squelch free speech. Recall the reaction of college administrators and left-wing campus groups across the country when collegiate conservatives came up with a novel way to protest affirmative action.

In Feb. 2003, the Bruin Republicans at UCLA held an Affirmative Action Bake Sale (AABS) where they charged different prices to different students based upon whether they were members of designated oppressor groups or designated victim groups. Black, Hispanic, and American Indian co-eds were charged 25 cents, while minority men were charged twice that. White females were charged \$1 per cookie, and white males and Asians were charged \$2.

The purpose of the bake sale was to make a satirical analogy: if applying different standards to different races in college admissions is a good idea, why isn't it a good idea to apply them to everything? The bake sales garnered a great deal of controversy and attention, and over the next year AABSs were held at over a dozen colleges across the country. At many of these schools, including Southern Methodist University, Northwestern, the University of Colorado, the University of Washington, and my own campus, the College of William and Mary, the conservative cookie chandlers were

faced with sometimes violent protests, bitter denunciations by their administration and professors, and censorship.

That opponents of affirmative action were accused of racism is hardly newsworthy. It is, however, worth examining the way campus administrators censored the AABSs to understand the state of academic freedom on American college campuses.

The late 1980s and early 1990s witnessed a great deal of outrage, and not just from the Right, over the repression of all things politically incorrect on campus. Books like Dinesh D'Souza's *Illiberal Education* and even Hollywood movies like "PCU" mocked the censorious attitude of both left-wing students and college administrations. In response, many universities repealed their explicit speech codes, and most people assumed the era of PC was over. But as the French say, "*Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*," and many schools simply relied on vague regulations against creating a "hostile environment" or "harassment" of protected minority groups to repress speech. This was one of the most common justifications for shutting down AABSs.

Tim Moore, the Southern Methodist University Student Center director, told the *Dallas Morning News*, "This was not an issue of free speech. It was really an issue where we had a hostile environment being created."

Some schools went even further by saying that the AABS created not only a "hostile" but also "unsafe" environment. At the University of Washington, left-

wing students tore down signs, stole cookies, and then threw them at the members of the College Republicans who were holding the bake sale. Instead of stopping the students disrupting the event, campus police, at the instruction of the student government and administration, shut down the bake sale. Rather than denounce the violent protestors, UW Board of Regents President Jerry Grinstein wrote a letter to a college newspaper stating, "The UW College Republicans in putting on a bake sale about affirmative action were tasteless, divisive and hurtful to many members of the university community."

At the University of Indiana, Rahsaan Bartet, a black student, filed a complaint to the administration requesting that the AABS held by a student group called the Committee for Freedom be closed. He claimed that the bake sale would "create a climate of hostility against students of color and women and can easily turn violent." To the university's credit, it ignored Bartet's request.

Even if we assume that the conservatives who held AABSs were all closet Klansmen, they have absolutely no control over the minority students. If minorities and liberals can't learn to deal with the fact that they have to live in a community where a few dozen students disagree with them, they will have serious problems after they graduate. On the other hand, the way the administration acted at many schools could easily be interpreted as creating a hostile environment for collegiate conservatives.

At William and Mary, in a show of the vast intellectual diversity of the faculty, the history department made a unanimous proclamation in support of affirmative action in which they stated that they “deplore all efforts [of those who oppose race based admissions] to belittle others on racial grounds or to substitute trafficking in racial stereotypes for reasoned, informed debate.” One professor even stated that she hated opponents of affirmative action. It seems apparent that conservatives have more reason to feel uncomfortable on campus than any minority student.

As few of the colleges have outright speech codes, many resorted to technicalities to justify their censorship. The most common method was to claim that by charging different prices, the student groups were guilty of discrimination. This was the justification by the University of California, Irvine; the University of Colorado; and William and Mary for terminating the bake sale. Of course, the purpose of charging different prices was satire, not discrimination. Furthermore, the AABS was modeled on pay-equity bake sales held by feminists. At these sales, to protest the alleged “gender gap,” women were charged 70 cents for a cookie and men were charged \$1. Dozens of pay-equity bake sales were held across the country without one being shut down for price discrimination.

At other universities, the causes for punishment were even more petty. The student government at Northwestern placed sanctions on an Objectivist group that held an AABS for financial misconduct because they did not use a university-sanctioned cashbox for the event. The bake sale netted 39 cents.

Conservative students have fought back through the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), a conservative/libertarian advocacy group that publicized the backtracking and hypocrisy of the administrations that

shut down the AABSs and threatened legal action if they did not permit the student groups to hold another bake sale. They successfully were able to get the administrations at Colorado, UC Irvine, and William and Mary to allow bake sales.

Another group, Students for Academic Freedom (SAF) has drafted an “Academic Bill of Rights” that is intended to preserve intellectual freedom and diversity on campus. According to SAF campus director Sara Dogan, the proposal would ensure “that colleges and universities will not put limits on students’ free speech rights and thus would prevent colleges from shutting down affirmative action bake sales, which are a legitimate form of political expression.” SAF encourages universities to adopt the Academic Bill of Rights and there is legislation in Congress and various state legislatures that would call on all public universities to adopt it.

Both FIRE and SAF argue that the schools that shut down AABSs are violating the First Amendment rights of the students by prohibiting their speech. While no one on the Right supports the censoring of conservative students, some conservatives and libertarians question whether the schools are actually violating anyone’s constitutional rights. Ten years ago, the late Murray Rothbard wrote on speech codes,

Private individuals or organizations can require anyone using their private property to follow rules of conduct or speech, and anyone using such property agrees contractually to abide by these rules. Any laws restricting such rules, therefore, infringe upon the rights of private property as well as the right to make free and unhampered contracts concerning its use.

William F. Buckley’s famous 1951 book on leftism on campus, *God and*

Man at Yale, was subtitled *The Superstitions of “Academic Freedom”* and explicitly defended Yale’s right to censor the views of students and professors.

FIRE’s director of legal affairs, Greg Lukianoff, argues that while the First Amendment does not apply to private property, most of the schools his organization threatened were public and, “If the First Amendment also did not apply on public property nowhere would be safe for free speech. If the government could treat all public property like it was ‘their’ property and not all of ours, freedom would cease to exist.” As for private universities, he claimed that because Northwestern (the only private university FIRE dealt with) explicitly guaranteed students’ free speech, “If you promise your students free speech and you deliver repression you have committed fraud and a variety of other violations of civil and common law.”

After being held at dozens of schools over the course of a year, AABSs have become a bit passé, and it is doubtful whether many more will occur. Conservative students have already come up with new ways to protest affirmative action. At Roger Williams University, the College Republicans offered a “whites-only scholarship” to mock the minority-only scholarships that the school sponsored. This drew even more condemnation than the bake sales, not only from the campus Left but also from the parts of the Right, with Sean Hannity and Republican National Committee Chairman Ed Gillespie joining in the attack. Other campus conservatives perhaps will not want to repeat that stunt, but the whites-only scholarship, like the bake sales before it, shows that while political correctness may still rule American colleges, it no longer reigns unchallenged. ■

Marcus Epstein is a student at the College of William and Mary.

Your Poor, Your Tired, My Clients

A day in the life of an immigration lawyer.

By Paul Moreland

AS EVERY TOURIST to New York City knows, Lady Liberty is shut down these days. But don't fret (in case you actually were); her welcoming beacon still burns bright, casting a special glow along our southwestern border.

Last month I was retained to pay a visit to a hapless inmate in one of the government's corporate detention facilities for immigrants—or "noncitizens," as those in the immigration game prefer to call them. (The Swiss banker who walks in my door to renew his temporary business visa and the illegal Dominican—who comes in after him perplexed that his four convictions for selling coke may actually disqualify him from receiving a green card based on his business marriage—are both noncitizens.)

My newest client came with a familiar story. Relatives on the receiving end did not know where he was or how he had gotten there or even that he had been coming to visit. Or so they claimed. And with nary a legal resident among his extensive family here, nobody was going to "immigration" to visit him, hence the trip to my office.

I find him in the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) facility, a windowless converted warehouse tucked away in the bleak freight belt that borders Newark Liberty Airport. The neighboring companies pack cargo containers to the ceilings in their warehouses. CCA packs immigrants into theirs.

I like the CCA employee dress code: mandatory white shirt with CCA emblem on the sleeve and black pants. Headgear and footwear are clearly at the

wearer's discretion. The guard at the window, decked out in a red doo-rag stylishly matched to the touch of red in the CCA badge and lots of dangling gold, is visibly angry to see me. My appearance meant signing me in, issuing me an attorney's badge, and retrieving my client from the bowels of the warehouse—kind of like going to Ikea and ordering something from the back racks.

"He's not here."

I'm too seasoned to fall for that brush-off.

Moments later, "OK, he's here, but it's headcount. You gotta wait."

Eventually, I am motioned through the metal detector and instructed to wait at the first cipher-lock door. There I notice a mural of the American flag and a mean-eyed eagle flying high. Next to it, like some ironic caption, are "work in progress" snapshots of the CCA inmates who were pressed into service painting the mural.

I wait in the visiting area. After headcount comes feeding time, and with it another delay. I am alone, the air has a greenhouse heaviness to it, and the only distraction is guards whooping it up over the walkie-talkies. Eventually my client shuffles in: a reed of a man with a patchwork of cryptic homemade tattoos running along his arm. My thoughts aren't unlike those I suppose Hernán Cortés may have had upon first site of the *naturales*.

He speaks no English and is barely literate in his native Spanish. Born into the perennial, democracy-proof poverty of

South America, he sought a way out through "coyotes" who, for a price, promised a better life north of the border. I recall less scrupulous smugglers who robbed a luckless Guyanese at the border and then turned him over to the Mexican police who robbed him of everything that escaped the first robbery and threw him into the Rio Grande. But for a blessed turn of the current he would have drowned. Instead, he washed up on the Texas bank of the river where, clad in only his skivvies, he walked straight into the hands of the Border Patrol, which is now the Bureau of Customs and Border Enforcement. (Perhaps the department ought to take the lead from the Artist Formerly Known as Prince: the Department Formerly Known as Immigration.) But all was not lost, since the moment the Rio Grande spit him out on its Lone Star bank, a whole host of due-process rights were waiting for him, including the right to be released on bond. His extended family hastily put together \$5000, and he is living happily ever after, having escaped British Guyana for the better life of Guyanese America—that is, Richmond Hill, Queens, the Guyanese colony in New York City.

My most recent client's crew was kinder—negligent but not malicious. They provided the young man and his group with ample water and food and then led them all unmolested across the *frontera*. With the only trace of a grin to rise from his sullen face during my interview, he told me that he had actually grown to like the guide who took pleasure

in outsmarting the gringos—though he later admitted that they hadn't actually seen any gringos anywhere along the border.

"Who were the others out there with you?" I inquired in my graceless New York lawyer Spanish.

"Oh all types," he answered.

Once in the U.S., he moved from house to house for a few days and eventually climbed into a waiting panel van for a long ride to Los Angeles. There a coyote handed him a Mexican ID card and a ticket for Continental Airlines Flight 1803 from LAX to Newark. Unfortunately for him, the same coyote had evidently handed 87 other tickets to the young man's fellow travelers, all of whom climbed onto the same flight bound for the kitchens of Soho, servants' quarters of the Upper East Side, and expansive lawns of Westchester. Perhaps a few were headed for the streets of Jackson Heights, Queens to find work in the burglary ring that the NYPD broke up last week, netting 63 Colombians, all illegals. But nobody can accuse these hardworking immigrants

the continental 48. Even if the department had been looking, what agency wants to risk charges of racial profiling?

Apparently, they were acting on a tip. But anyone acquainted with the Greater Metropolitan Area immigration game has to wonder just what kind of tip was served up. Uninitiated readers might assume that tips are an integral part of homeland security. Try picking up the phone and speaking to an agent at the Investigations Unit at 26 Federal Plaza in Downtown Manhattan. Or write a certified letter to the same and see who shows up at your door first, Ed McMahon with your sweepstakes fortune or a concerned DHS investigator with a notepad.

The young man sat before me, demoralized and angry. He had been duped, he said, into signing a waiver of a hearing before an immigration judge and had signed a removal order while still in the terminal. He said that the gringo agent who compelled him to sign did not speak very good Spanish and had not told him about the rights he later learned he was imbued with by virtue of getting two boots across the border.

HE SAID THAT THE GRINGO AGENT HAD NOT TOLD HIM ABOUT THE RIGHTS HE WAS IMBUED WITH BY VIRTUE OF GETTING TWO BOOTS ACROSS THE BORDER.

—they stole approximately \$1.5 million worth of goods from some 300 Queens homes—of being ungrateful to their host country: their targets were almost exclusively Chinese and Indian immigrants. They left the natives alone. Maybe this is why the Department of Homeland Security left them alone.

It seems that the ever-vigilant DHS would not have questioned such a concentration of *campesinos* on one flight. In fact, the department probably wasn't even looking, since in the main illegal aliens fly the friendly skies unquestioned as long as the flight path remains over

More than anything, he was disappointed with the quality of the services rendered by the coyotes. Too bad for him he hadn't got nabbed tiptoeing along the northern side of the border, since at least then there would have been removal proceedings, venue changes, and, most importantly, bond to secure his freedom.

When I got back to my office in Manhattan late that afternoon, the Ecuadorian cleaning guy came by to empty the trash. I related his young compatriot's tale of woe, and he pointed to that day's edition of one of the Spanish papers and a story about some Latino Congress

people who think that inspecting domestic flights for immigration violators is cause for moral outrage—a violation of civil rights, racial profiling, and wholly un-American. The legislators promise to take action to have the practice stopped.

As of this writing, our friend is whiling away his hours in the custody of CCA—"three hots and a cot," as they used to say. I've heard there's an exercise yard up on the roof of the warehouse.

Unless you are gullible enough actually to enter the country at an airport, you don't need a passport to get *in*—but you do need one to get *out*. Our young man has no passport or any other identification for that matter. Under international agreements, the U.S. cannot ship him back until the receiving country has acknowledged him as being one of theirs, sort of like an international paternity test. So he is trapped between two bureaucracies: the layers of U.S. immigration authorities and the government of the Republic of Ecuador. How many months, for these things are never measured in days, will it take the Ecuadorian consulate to issue him a passport or travel document? I won't even hazard a guess except to say that even with a lawyer harassing the respective officials to get him out—a task I'm often retained to do—it's going to be a while.

I don't have any real idea how much the federal government pays CCA per head to keep watch over the detritus that washes ashore from the particular branch of the stream of commerce known as immigration. But I imagine it's not unlike hospitals billing HMOs. This ought to generate a warm fuzzy feeling for CCA shareholders. The taxpayer should be so lucky.

Perhaps next time they shut down the Statue of Liberty they will remember to extinguish her torch for a while. ■

Paul Moreland is the pen name of an immigration lawyer in New York City.

Most Favored Nation

Several months before the Iraq invasion commenced, I was talking with Owen Harries, an old friend and once my boss at the *National Interest*, and despairing

over what was likely to transpire. Of course no one could then know the details. Perhaps Saddam did have chemical weapons and would use them; perhaps hundreds of thousands of innocents would be killed in the invasion; perhaps *we* would decide to use tactical nuclear weapons to protect our own troops.

But one could be sure of certain basics: that the United States would go to war without real allies (except Britain); that much of the world would be rooting against us; that Arab populations would be enraged; that Iraqi nationalism—the normal and universal human desire not be ruled by foreigners—would effectively ensure that there was no political benefit to be gained from toppling Saddam; that the invasion would take resources away from the difficult war against al-Qaeda and indeed serve as a powerful recruiting agent for Muslim terrorists.

While Owen didn't entirely disagree, he made an effort to temper my pessimism. He said something of the order, "God tends to smile on the United States," though perhaps he did not bring God into it. He reminded me that mine was a tremendously fortunate country—one with an un-tragic past—and that its historical winning streak might well hold. His observation was one that almost any intelligent foreigner (though Owen had edited a Washington-based publication for 15 years, he is Australian, though originally from Wales) of the generation that had lived through World War II would

feel in his bones—and it was a sentiment that baby boomers like myself were soaked in while growing up.

Can such good fortune be sustained? If political leadership matters in a time of danger and crisis, there is ample reason to doubt it.

In President Bush, the United States is led by a man who doesn't read the newspapers and is essentially a captive of his advisors—which assures that none of them are likely to be forced out over a failed policy. Will anyone resign over the circulation of fake intelligence used to drive America into this war? Rumsfeld, Cheney, or the neocons in key staff positions? Not a sign of it. Indeed, not a sign that Bush weighs the contending arguments made by the various members of his administration—or that he is even capable of doing so. (In today's America, on the basis of his SAT scores, George W. Bush could not gain admission to a first-rate state university without special dispensation.)

One of the more telling facts to emerge during the Abu Ghraib prison scandal is that Rumsfeld and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Richard Myers did not feel it necessary to inform Bush about abuse reports at the time when Myers was negotiating with CBS over the timing of their release. Bush is simply not someone with whom the key players in the administration feel they need to share matters of the most grave importance—that is, he is not really president. He plays president in the photographs, rather as he plays at being a Navy pilot. (Norman Mailer wrote that

his singular talent lies in that he never takes a bad picture and unfortunately missed his calling as a male model.)

And yet, amazingly, there is no serious opposition to him in the Republican Party. No one challenged him in a primary, no one cuts a notable figure of opposition in the Senate. It makes telling contrast to recall the turmoil that wracked the country in 1968, when a previous president had driven the nation into an unwinnable war. The Democratic establishment was in heat. First one key Senator (Gene McCarthy) challenged Johnson, to be followed soon by another (Robert Kennedy). Virtually the party's entire political and intellectual establishment recognized the situation as a disaster and was willing to stand up against the war, even at the expense of party unity and November victory.

Contrast that with today's cramped and unimaginative Republican quiescence, a symptom of an establishment that no longer takes seriously the responsibilities of democratic political leadership or national stewardship. That can't be blamed on George W. Bush—or the neocons.

When the Democrats, for their part, select a candidate who supports the war, the harm is doubled. It means the U.S. can undertake a venture that does grave and lasting harm to its place in the world—one opposed by nearly half the population—and there is no serious political opposition to it. (Yes, I know Nader is running).

It is this dismal no-exit situation, the absence of political alternatives, and, worse, the absence of real anger that there isn't really a choice, that—far more than a bad president—raises doubts about whether fortune still favors America. ■

Arts & Letters

FILM

[Troy]

Brad Pitt's Homer Run

By Steve Sailer

THE LAVISH, AND DESERVED, success of 2000's "Gladiator" set off an almost comical frenzy among Hollywood's he-man stars and directors to mount stupendous productions honoring the pagan heroes with whom they most closely identify. Back in the 1930s, studios would have hustled out numerous knock-offs of Ridley Scott's sword-and-sandal hit within a year, but in today's entrepreneurial industry, the pace of deal-making is ponderous, and the chance of a particular project making it all the way to your local multiplex is shaky.

For example, veteran director Michael Mann ("Ali") tried to launch movies about a couple of guys he feels he can relate to: Julius Caesar and King Leonidas of Sparta, hero of Thermopylae. But in Hollywood, after all is said and done, more is said than done, so don't expect to see either any time soon. Similarly, Denzel Washington was attached to an Afrocentrist life of Hannibal (not the Cannibal, but the elephant-bestrident Carthaginian general). Vin Diesel's more ethnically correct Hannibal, though, now looks likelier to get off the ground.

At one point, Oliver Stone, Mel Gibson, Martin Scorsese, and, improbably enough, Baz Luhrmann of "Moulin Rouge" were all vying to make Alexander the Great

movies. The only right and fitting solution would have been for each to lead his cast of thousands into a mass melee on an agreed-upon battlefield, with the last auteur standing getting to make his conqueror epic while the losers lick their wounds. Disappointingly, a humdrum race to organize financing and logistics instead ensued, with Stone the apparent winner.

Yet, the laurel for being the first to wrap a "Gladiator" facsimile goes to Wolfgang Petersen, director of "Das Boot" and "The Perfect Storm." His seriously barbaric "Troy," starring Brad Pitt as the wrathful Achilles, turns out to be worth the 48-month wait.

Just as Achilles is destined to fight Hector, prince of Troy, Pitt's looks and talent have always seemed to foreordain that he'll challenge Tom Cruise, prince of blockbusters, for leading-man supremacy. Much as Pitt resembles a younger Robert Redford, however, he seems to lack the necessary Legend in His Own Mind gene. Notorious as an underachiever who sells more magazines than movie tickets, Pitt has favored quirky roles better suited to Steve Buscemi. Yet, by starring in this super-colossal \$185 million extravaganza as fabled Achilles, a hero driven solely by his lust for eternal fame, Pitt finally has submitted to his fate. Of course, Achilles is such an antihero that Pitt isn't fully sacrificing his indie cred. (The 40-year-old's insanely ripped abs and ferociously masculine persona make me wonder whether he turned to hormonal help.)

The film works best for semi-educated folks like me who know the characters of Homer's *Iliad* but had forgotten the finer points of his plot.

Homeric aficionados will sniff that young screenwriter David Benioff cut the meddlesome Olympian gods while expanding the plot beyond Homer's

tight focus to include such traditional crowd-pleasers as the launching of the thousand ships and the delivering of the Trojan horse. Worse, Benioff makes up new scenes. For instance, the myths violated Screenwriting 101 by killing off the star before the boffo finale, so Benioff sends Achilles with the commandos in the Trojan horse.

The gay crowd will moan that Achilles's pal Patroclus has been turned into a chaste cousin, but ancient Greek bisexuality was so radically unlike modern American homosexuality that gays shouldn't have proprietary rights over Achilles's depiction.

I fear that Petersen, a 63-year-old German, may have overestimated the classical learning of America's movie-going lumpen-youth. For example, the wily but likeable tactician played by Sean Bean is introduced only as "the King of Ithaca." A less trusting soul would have explained to the teen audience that he's Odysseus. ("The one who got, like, his own spin-off sequel, you know?") Moreover, "Troy," like Homer, refuses to tell them for whom to root. The mind-their-own-business Trojans are nicer, but the belligerent Greeks are winners.

Still, the youth market may find the Bronze Age warriors comprehensible since their pre-chivalric trash-talking ethos prefigures that of post-chivalric African-American athletes like the petulant hoops prodigy Allen Iverson and rappers like the murdered Tupac Shakur. Achilles sulking in his tent because King Agamemnon insulted his honor by taking his spoils-of-war sweetheart Briseis is surprisingly like Kobe Bryant moping on the court because Shaquille O'Neal dissed him by demanding the basketball. ■

Rated a moderate R for graphic violence and some sexuality/nudity.

BOOKS

[*Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet*, James Mann, Viking Press, 372 pages]

Bush's Six-Pack

By Georgie Anne Geyer

AFTER TWO YEARS of mysterious conjecture about what is really behind the adventurism of the Bush administration, we are now suddenly inundated with a series of excellent and revealing books about this curiously radical group of American men and women who, in such very odd and threatening ways, "govern" us.

And of all the books so far, James Mann's work on "the Vulcans"—while not as charmingly salacious, politically angry, and gut-personal as the Bob Woodward, Paul O'Neill, and Richard Clarke books—is a particularly valuable contribution, perhaps one that will come to stand as *The Best and the Brightest* of the Iraq War. Its value lies not only in the consummate fairness of the author's judgments (sometimes too fair, actually) but in the fact that Mann roves back in history meticulously and conscientiously to pull out the skeletons of these new foreign-policy ideologies of the Bush team and examine their DNA.

Contrary to what most observers have thought, these ideas did not come out of nowhere; in fact, they were buried to most Americans, but they were busily germinating just underneath the topsoil of the country's leadership classes. (As the evocative Pablo Neruda once noted, "Everything that is buried is not dead.") The author establishes this to such a successful extent that, after reading this book, one can see, really for the first time, how utterly inevitable were the

outcomes of the Vulcans' thinking. For, beginning in the 1970s and particularly with the commencement of Reagan's traditionally conservative presidency in 1981, this group of thinkers and doers was forming an "epochal change, the flowering of a new view of America's status and role in the world."

Indeed, at the end of this very readable book, Mann, who is a highly respected former foreign correspondent with the *Los Angeles Times* and an author and specialist on China, and whose two-year tenure at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington allowed him to write this book, makes it completely clear what he has to say.

"There was no question that the Vulcans' venture into Iraq grew out of their previous 35 years of thinking about America's role in the world. It represented a final step in the transfer of ideas that the Vulcans had formed during the cold war into a post-cold war world—the ideas that the United States should emphasize military strength, should spread its ideals and should not accommodate other centers of power." Hidden within the general picture that the Cold War ended in 1989 and a new, still unformed post-Cold War world started, "there lay another, entirely different historical narrative, one that began in the two decades before 1989 and continued for at least 15 years afterward. It was the story of the pursuit of unrivaled American power, the story of the rise of the Vulcans."

Curiously enough, the supposed author of these policies—President George W. Bush—is barely mentioned in this book. He is the man who isn't there and, obviously in the author's opinion, the man who didn't really have much to do with the thinking behind all that he let loose on the world. "He could not have made decisions if the Vulcans had not laid out the choices," Mann writes in the foreword. "He could not have formulated policy without the words and ideas they brought to him." (So much for the "War President!")

Curiously, too, almost none of the neoconservatives who back up the

Vulcans served in the armed forces—most avidly sought out deferments, with Vice President Dick Cheney getting five of them because, as he said later, "I had other priorities." Yet their policies are unidimensionally devoted to using military force, at almost every turn and with very few of the old rules and principles to hold them back. Here, too, they stand in sharpest contrast to the American establishment that came out of World War II. Almost all the leaders of that establishment were military men, some of them true heroes, and their contribution to their generation and to their country was to establish great peaceful institutions spanning the world that uniquely combined the political, the economic, and the social with the military only secondary in their plans.

Rise of the Vulcans revolves around six major players in the Bush War Party: Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, Richard Armitage, and Paul Wolfowitz. Mann structures the book, very effectively, by taking the six—Bush's "war cabinet"—and tracing backwards to their inspiration and formation. He is particularly effective in tying together all the hitherto unclear biographical profiles of the players—the way their careers, ideas and, indeed, obsessions crossed and crisscrossed from the late '70s onward. The genealogical/ideological line gets a little confusing because not all of them are neoconservatives of that peculiarly radical and pugnacious cabal that dominated the Iraq War's planning (those are more second-level people like Richard Perle, Douglas Feith, and Elliott Abrams). Powell and Armitage, indeed, are anti-neocon, while Rice is more of an intellectual mentor to the president. Yet, Mann brings it all together and, because he is such a meticulous researcher, it all adds up.

Mann gathers his subjects under this new (and, frankly, confusing) moniker of "Vulcan." It seems that a statue of that particular Roman god of fire and metal-working overlooked Condoleezza Rice's birthplace in Birmingham, Alabama, and somewhere along the way she and her

colleagues adopted the term as a proof of their “tough-as-nailness.”

There are many things one could say about this book, but what I found to be the most compelling storyline of *Rise of the Vulcans* is the degree to which some of these six, and especially all the others in the War Party around them, are consummate “irregulars” at heart, in thinking and in action. One sees, swimming deeper into the tides within this book, how people like Paul Wolfowitz, Dick Cheney, and Donald Rumsfeld in particular were always seeking to work around the system and to do things in an irregular manner and with a special forces or guerrilla/militiaman mentality.

VULCAN WAS A DESTRUCTIVE GOD, NOT THE GOD OF JUSTICE BUT THE GOD OF VOLCANOES AND CONFLAGRATIONS.

All along the way, they knew best—in fact, only they knew how to do things, whether it was the intelligence that was wrong or the analysis of the Soviet Union or the half-wars of the 1990s.

In 1976, they were the members of the now-famous “Team B,” which went around the deterrence/containment policy toward the Soviet Union articulated by Henry Kissinger, among others, and issued a scathing report to the Pentagon urging all-out economic war, backed by overwhelming military strength, against the Russians. Mann reveals the secretive actions of members of the Vulcans during the '80s when, as part of a highly classified Reagan administration program, Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld and a few others would be sent out across the country to three different locations in preparation for the possibility of a nuclear attack.

“Each team had to be prepared to proclaim a new American ‘president’ and to assume command of the country,” Mann writes. “Then, if the Soviet Union was somehow to locate one of the teams and hit it with a nuclear weapon, a second team could take over and, if necessary, the third.” The problem was that this

program was “extralegal and extraconstitutional and that it established a process for designating a new American president that is nowhere authorized in the U.S. Constitution or federal law ...”

It goes on and on. Before the '91 war with Iraq, Cheney and Wolfowitz immediately began developing their own war plan “without telling Powell or anyone else on the Joint Chiefs of Staff.” It wasn't very far to the Office of Special Plans under the fanatical neoconservative and Likud supporter Douglas Feith, just under Rumsfeld at the Pentagon—that irregular office, too, was designed to bypass regular intelligence to pull together exactly what the War Party

wanted and needed to realize their overweening obsession of attacking Iraq in order to reconfigure the Middle East, supposedly for America's and Israel's benefit.

In short, this coterie now running the nation is a group of special teams, of special plans, of plans A and B, of clandestine meetings and, at every turn of the road, of going around the system, often deceptively and disdainfully, and instead setting in place alternative, parallel systems to facilitate their movements but also to show their derision for the “regulars” of the institutions. While not making any moral comparisons, this kind of restructuring with parallel groups is exactly what Hitler did with the German military and the S.S. and what Milosevic did with the Yugoslav National Army and his militia groups. The act has an ancient lineage, one far from traditional America.

All of this presaged what then came to be the irregular quality of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq: the Special Forces, not congressionally controlled like the Army, led the way in both wars; the military contractors, with hardly any oversight at all, now comprise the second largest “army” in Iraq, with

20,000 contracting/fighting men, armed to the teeth and with no governmental controls. Decades of American checks and balances (indeed, the very guts of the American system), have been tremendously endangered by the Vulcans, and in some cases thrown out entirely.

James Mann's book, as valuable as it is, will not in the end, however, be another *Best and Brightest*, if only because David Halberstam wrote his classic book long after the Vietnam War, when he could see fully what a tragedy it had been. Mann's book comes right in the middle of this newest exercise in reckless American utopianism. Yet, one can already cull from this fine prose the realization that just about everything this group, particularly the neocons among the Vulcans, thought and did was wrong. Bitter critics of American intelligence in the '70s and '80s, they have corrupted the intelligence gathering profession immeasurably more than anyone before them; cold militarists at heart, they turned out to be men and women incapable of making the most minimal sense of ruling Iraq; prideful of their new (“neo”) philosophical and ideological truths, they obviously had not the slightest understanding of what creates a culture and a people; and arrogant believers in a modern American superiority above all and for all time, they have only made America look foolish and inept in the eyes of the world.

Maybe in the end Vulcans is an appropriate name after all. For Vulcan was a destructive god, not the god of justice but the god of volcanoes and conflagrations. Because he was such a dangerous deity, Vulcan's temples were properly located outside the cities—another aspect of “irregularity.” Apparently, too, the Washington Vulcans did not know that Vulcan was ultimately thrown off Mount Olympus by Zeus because he was so ugly. ■

Georgie Anne Geyer is a syndicated international columnist for Universal Press Syndicate and the author of Guerrilla Prince, The Untold Story of Fidel Castro.

[*The Soft Cage: Surveillance in America From Slave Passes to the War on Terror*, Christian Parenti, Basic Books, 273 pages]

Keeping an Eye on You

By James Bovard

CHRISTIAN PARENTI has written a lively, engaging survey of the history of surveillance in America. At a time when the Bush administration seems to be pulling a new surveillance rabbit out of its hat each week, getting an overview of previous assaults on privacy is a good defense. Not surprisingly, the book does not have a laudatory jacket blurb from John Ashcroft.

The Soft Cage starts from the methods used to identify and track runaway slaves in the old South, discusses the development of police mug shots in the mid- to late 1800s, and reveals how the new methodology of fingerprints was especially popular with the Interior Department as a way to keep track of the Indians on the reservations. In the early years of the 20th century, advocates of social control urged fingerprinting far and wide as the way to protect society. Parenti notes, "A favorite Trojan horse for encouraging fingerprinting was the call for printing all babies—the natural precursor to printing all people. In New York, Deputy Police Commissioner Joseph A. Faurot was particularly aggressive in pushing for the use of prints on birth certificates."

Governments are now going wild with closed circuit television (CCTV) surveillance. The Washington, D.C. system is one of the most advanced in the nation and is a primary reason that street crime has been practically eliminated in the nation's capital. Well, perhaps street crime has not been eliminated, and may actually be increasing—but at least politicians feel more secure knowing that the government is

keeping an eye on far more people. Parenti reports that, once the District of Columbia surveillance system becomes fully operational, "police will have the ability to read license plates and track cars moving through the city, zoom in on individuals, read newsprint from hundreds of feet away, and send real-time images to the laptops of the department's one thousand patrol cars. Engineers are even working to equip some of the cameras with night vision and possibly biometric facial recognition software."

London is the most heavily CCTVed city on Earth—a blanket that was placed upon the city partly in response to IRA attacks. But "no terrorists have been caught via CCTV," and the vast increase in surveillance has not prevented a recent rise in crime.

It is not only the government that stockpiles information: private businesses, from credit card companies to data mining firms, are vacuuming up information by the gigabyte on hundreds of millions of Americans. At some point, the government may be able to tap such resources fully—if it is not already doing so.

Parenti places surveillance in the context of subjugation, showing how the information gathered on individuals can and will be used against them. Unfortunately, the vast majority of contemporary surveillance schemes do not come with a Miranda warning. Parenti says, "constant surveillance brings forth loyal citizens, trained soldiers, obedient patients, productive workers, and docile, useful bodies."

The book's final chapter, "Fear as Institution: 9/11 and Surveillance Triumphant," delves into the Brave New post-9/11 World. Parenti observes, "In many ways the frightening thing about the post-attack crackdown has been how much of everyday life was prefabricated to fit neatly into a new and larger project of intensified state observation and repression." Parenti notes that this illustrates how "the cumulative overall effect of such [surveillance] measures is corrosive of popular democratic rights and tradition."

The book has 17 pages on surveillance and tracking measures for slaves before the Civil War and only four pages on the Patriot Act, the Total Information Awareness (TIA) program, and Operation TIPS (Terrorist Information and Prevention System). More detail on some of the hottest issues of our times would be helpful—considering how the Bush administration quickly exploited the pervasive fear after 9/11 to unleash government surveillance and intrusions far and wide. Regardless of the reasons the Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation failed to stop the hijackers, the solution was far more snooping and the potential creation of hundreds of millions of dossiers on American citizens. Almost overnight, it became widely accepted that the government must have unlimited prerogative to search anywhere and everywhere for enemies of freedom. The worse the government failed, the further it permitted itself to intrude.

The absurdity of some of the old-time fanatic surveillance schemes Parenti discusses will make contemporary Americans shake their heads ruefully. But what will people a few decades from now think about the Bush administration's efforts to achieve Total Information Awareness? (This is assuming that the entire subject has not been classified and that history books and the Internet have not been fully scrubbed.)

TIA was spawned as a result of the Patriot Act's creation of an Information Office in the Pentagon's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). The Information Office launched TIA to create a vast database dragnet, potentially creating hundreds of millions of files on Americans containing all their phone bills, all their medical records, and everything they purchase (from books to magazines to plane tickets to guns)—all in the name of pre-emptively detecting terrorists.

There may be nothing in Parenti's book to rival TIA's program to achieve "Human Identification at a Distance" (HumanID), including "Face Recognition," "Iris Recognition," and "Gait

Recognition.” The Pentagon issued a request for proposals to develop an “odor recognition” surveillance system that would help the feds identify people by their sweat or urine.

As Parenti shows, overreaching surveillance can sometimes spur a backlash. Congress in early 2003 reined in TIA development—but not before

customers, with the ‘assurance’ that the FBI will record only conversations of the specified target.”

Prior to 9/11, Carnivore was criticized in Congress as an unconstitutional intrusion. After 9/11, the Bush administration was determined to legitimize Carnivore, which was done by blatantly misrepresenting its capacities and understating

tration makes it likely that enormous quantities of additional records will be created on the financial lives of Americans.” And the information that is stockpiled will be shared far and wide. *Money Laundering Alert* newsletter described one financial provision of the Patriot Act as a “dream-come-true information gathering tool for U.S. agencies,” extending a “welcome mat to the Central Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency and other U.S. counterparts” to look at the new financial information on American citizens and others.

It would have been nice if Parenti had done more on the Patriot Act since President Bush is apparently planning to make it a key plank in his re-election campaign. Bush is revving up the rhetoric on this topic and doing as much damage to the facts as he does on foreign policy. Speaking in Buffalo on April 20, Bush told a carefully selected adoring audience, “the reason I bring up the Patriot Act, it’s set to expire next year. I’m starting a campaign to make it clear to members of Congress it shouldn’t expire. It shouldn’t expire, for the security of our country.” Actually, only about 10 percent of the law expires. Congress included sunset provisions on some of the more controversial parts of the Patriot Act so that it could confirm that such powers were both needed and were being properly used. The Justice Department has refused to disclose the details of how many of the new powers

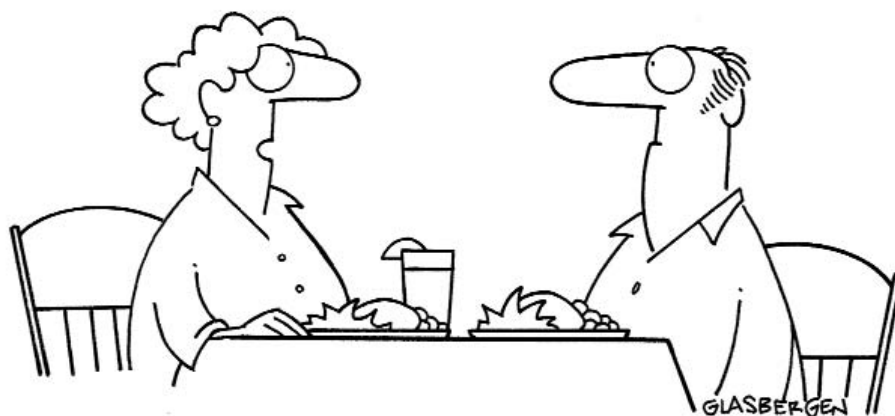
JUDGES HAVE NO DISCRETION: THEY MUST APPROVE WIRETAPS BASED ON GOVERNMENT AGENTS’ UNSUBSTANTIATED ASSERTIONS.

DARPA awarded 26 contracts for private research projects to develop components for TIA. The Associated Press reported on March 15 that the feds are pursuing massive data mining research closely akin to TIA—especially the Novel Intelligence from Massive Data (NIMD) project being conducted by the National Security Agency’s Advanced Research and Development Activity. While Congress mandated that TIA develop privacy-protection computer projects, there is no such requirement for NIMD. A spokesman for Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) complained, “We feel Congress is not getting enough information about who is undertaking this research and where it’s headed and how they intend to protect the civil liberties of Americans.”

The *Soft Cage* only briefly mentions Carnivore—which is unfortunate because this is the most dangerous information vacuum many Americans will ever encounter. In the Patriot Act, Congress officially blessed the FBI’s use of its Carnivore e-mail wiretapping system. Carnivore is contained in a black box that the FBI compels Internet service providers (ISPs) to attach to their operating systems. Though a Carnivore tap might be imposed to target a single person, the device can automatically impound the e-mail of all the customers using that ISP. The ACLU’s Barry Steinhardt explained, “Carnivore is roughly equivalent to a wiretap capable of accessing the contents of the conversations of all of the phone company’s

how much information Carnivore captures. The Patriot Act puts e-mail wiretaps on automatic pilot. An FBI agent or government lawyer need only certify to a judge that the information sought is “relevant to an ongoing criminal investigation” to get permission to install Carnivore. Judges have no discretion: they must approve wiretaps based on government agents’ unsubstantiated assertions.

The Soft Cage does not penetrate into the financial intrusion aspects of the Patriot Act—though this could have a profound effect on average Americans’ lives. The legislation gave the feds the right to strip-search the finances of every American. Banks are now reporting far more personal and financial information to the feds. The *Wall Street Journal* noted, “The full range of anti-terrorism measures taken by the adminis-



“This is the nicest conversation we’ve had in weeks.
Let’s not spoil it by talking”

are being used, and Bush appears confident that he can railroad the extension of the controversial provisions the same way that he and Ashcroft jammed the original Patriot Act through Congress.

Despite its shortcomings, Parenti's book is a reminder of how far Americans have fallen from their once scrupulous respect for privacy. Federal judge Gerhard Gesell, in a 1974 ruling on illegal Nixon administration searches, observed, "The American Revolution was sparked in part by the complaints of the colonists against the issuance of writs of assistance, pursuant to which the King's revenue officers conducted unrestricted, indiscriminate searches of persons and homes to uncover contraband." Unfortunately, the revolutionary spirit now animating Washington is fighting to replace the right to privacy with the right to intrude. ■

James Bovard is the author of Terrorism and Tyranny: Trampling Freedom, Justice, and Peace to Rid the World of Evil and the forthcoming The Bush Betrayal.

[*Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, Joseph S. Nye, PublicAffairs, 240 pages]

Killing Them Softly

By Wayne Merry

SOME CONCEPTS in public affairs seem so obvious it is noteworthy when a person's name is attached to them. Such a concept is "soft power," baptized in the late '80s by Joseph Nye, now Dean of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. In contrast to "hard" military and economic power, Nye defines "soft power" as the combination of a country's culture, domestic values, and foreign policy. For 15 years, Nye has argued that America possesses "soft power" in abundance but knows not how to marshal and exploit it. In a new book, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, Nye recapitulates his views on the importance of matching our military and economic prowess with comparable emphasis on "public diplomacy" and other instruments of soft power.

The book is a quick and easy read, in essence an extended journal article. Little in its argumentation is new, though this is true of most public affairs volumes. Those who believe in the essential efficacy of military power (not, in my experience, the view of most military men) will dismiss the arguments as, well, soft. Despite the experience of Indo-China and Iraq, there are still those who believe that, "if you've got them by the balls, their hearts and minds will follow." Those who abjure the use of armed force in all but direct self-defense will welcome an alternative "means to success in world politics," but perhaps take little comfort from Nye's prescription for combining the hard and soft elements of our arsenal as "smart power."

Nye correctly gives a failing grade to the current administration for jettisoning humility and good manners in American

diplomacy (which candidate Bush advocated) in favor of the neoconservative prescription of pre-emptive rudeness. It should be painful for almost any citizen to realize how much international goodwill and sympathy generated by the terrorist attacks of September 2001 has been squandered, even among our closest allies.

Nye is also fair enough to acknowledge that most government-sponsored efforts to enhance the American image abroad—our "public diplomacy"—were geared down in the Clinton years. He does not note how close is the parallel of these two presidents who share the assumption that, if foreigners just knew us better, they would like and emulate us.

Certainly, the public-diplomacy programs Nye wants to reinvigorate served us well in the Cold War. From my years in the Soviet Union, I can testify to the impact of radio broadcasts, such as the jazz programs of late Willis Conover over the Voice of America, which, without a syllable of politics, were as corrosive to socialist realism as the strongest acid. Paying to bring young potential leaders from other countries for educational visits to the United States is also excellent seed money, with a multiplier effect beyond calculation. Many programs aimed at strengthening civil societies in transitional states can also pay good dividends in the long run. There is, however, a very real limit to what such efforts can achieve when faced with a "clash of civilizations," even when the clash is not of our choosing.

At heart, soft power is a soft concept, malleable in definition and subject to as many interpretations as the persons employing it. How is soft power today different from the past—did not imperial Athens have more of it than Sparta and still lose? If the force of American culture and values is so great, why does it need government sponsorship and funding? Is public diplomacy really just a nice term for government propaganda? (Propaganda that is often an ignominious failure, as was the Bush administration's use of Madison Avenue

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techniques to persuade the world's Muslims that America is really a good guy, despite invading some of their countries and bankrolling Israel.) Are domestic culture and values something we really want linked to our diplomacy? I was a professional diplomat and represented America's policies and interests, but routinely violated its values; diplomacy is not called the art of lying for one's country for nothing. Do we besmirch our culture and values, as well as diminish their positive impact in the world, by hitching them to the cart of foreign policy? Nye says we need "to establish more policy coherence among the dimensions of public diplomacy," but our soft power would benefit much more through coherence in foreign policy itself.

Nye is very American in his concept and in his vision that soft power can help spread American influence and values throughout the world. This, I suspect, is a man who gets a tingle when re-reading lines from John Kennedy's inaugural address. Therein lies the real problem with soft power. Nye portrays the joining of American culture and values with our role in the world in almost exclusively positive, achievement-oriented terms. Soft power, in his view, is a great national asset that people in Washington fail to employ to the full. Fine, but what about the other side of the ledger, what about the liabilities of American soft power?

Certainly, American culture (broadly defined) and values (often ill-defined) bestride today's world like a colossus along with our political, economic, and military might. America is the *sine qua non* of modernity and the font of globalization, even when the product, service, or idea comes from Europe or Japan. This is great if, like Nye or Thomas Friedman, you embrace modernity and globalization. On the other hand, if to you the modern world is less a super-market of opportunities and choices than a terrifying tsunami of challenges and change, you might think less well of the source of all this unsolicited disruption of your world.

People everywhere fall into two basic types when faced with challenges or problems of any kind. There are those who ask, "What do I do about this?" and those who ask, "Who has done this to me?" America was largely settled by self-selected people of the first type who created a culture that justifies the old quip that, when faced with a lemon, we make lemonade.

Joseph Nye is definitely of the first type and an American archetype in embracing soft power as a new frontier in American foreign affairs. Unfortunately, much of mankind and most of the Islamic world is of the second type. The need for a scapegoat is the dark underside of globalization, and doubly so in societies that manifestly have failed to meet the challenges of moder-

Like it or not, in the world's eye America is three things: power in every imaginable form, prosperity that still inspires thousands to line up each day for visas, and modernity with all the pluses and minuses of what Joseph Schumpeter called "creative destruction." These three are inextricably linked. The problem is not that we do not market ourselves well enough but that American power in the world is so pervasive and disruptive that we have become almost a force of nature.

Most people in traditional societies are not of the first type; they do not like change, they fear it. That fear increases at higher socio-economic levels. It is not the poor peasant who fears modernity so much as the landlord, not the non-unionized unskilled worker so much as the

AS GOLIATH, WE MUST EXPECT TO GET **LITTLE ENDURING SYMPATHY** EVEN FROM THOSE WHO **SHELTER BEHIND OUR HARD-POWER SHIELD.**

nity. America is the inevitable target of this transnational anger, resentment, and envy. As Goliath, we must expect to get little enduring sympathy even from those who shelter behind our hard-power shield.

This rap on America is, to be sure, in many ways quite unfair. Change is the norm of human history; modernity always has and always will challenge and disrupt the lives of most people. At the same time, America remains a society of resilient traditional values and customs. Witness the overt patriotism and religiosity that so embarrass many foreign visitors. The honesty of most public officials, the trusting quality of average citizens, and the generosity of spirit and wallet that so characterize America are more the stuff of Boy Scout stereotypes than is the image sent forth by Hollywood of a violent, sex-driven, and vulgar society. In this respect, Bush is right that the world really does need to know us better. So what? Our virtues are their own reward, not play-acting for the benefit of visitors.

provincial boss, not the true victims of the world but those for whom stability maintains the status quo. This is why neo-Soviet nomenklaturas reject the American model of popular accountable governance; it is inconsistent with their hold on the "vertical of power." This is why European elites loathe the intrusion of American mass culture where culture had been their exclusive preserve of status and privilege; mass culture empowers the masses. This is why advocates of Islamic statehood based on strict hierarchy and control so violently hate the American example of individual choice; their people might not choose to be controlled for long. Change is ultimately about power relationships. American soft power remains revolutionary but, as such, is a two-edged sword when anti-modern forces can assault vulnerable modern society with its own tools.

It is precisely when our way of life is linked to our foreign policy that things get out of control. To be resented for our culture and values is a badge of honor. To be the object of the world's venom

for ill-conceived policies is neither honorable nor necessary. Therein lies the weakness of the soft power concept: it links this country's core virtues to fallible political choices to the detriment of the former. For Americans to die because we represent a worthy vision of a better society is tragic but a price worth paying. For Americans to die because Washington ideologues seek to remake parts of the world best left to their own devices is tragic waste. Soft power is supposed to be based on values, but it can be mobilized in conjunction with policies at odds with the entire course and tenor of American history. Indeed, the logic of soft power is entirely consistent with the neoconservative hubris of global transformation and American hegemony.

Nye defines "smart power" as combining hard military power with soft power. A better approach to true smart power for America as both Great Power and great nation lies in knowing when not to use our great power at all and, above all, how to use it with restraint and constitutional legitimacy in cases of clear American interest. Then, the force of our culture and values can and will shine clear. ■

Wayne Merry is a former State Department and Pentagon official and now a Senior Associate at the American Foreign Policy Council in Washington.

[*The Norman Podhoretz Reader: A Selection of His Writings From the 1950s Through the 1990s*, Thomas L. Jeffers, ed., The Free Press, 478 pages]

Idol With Clay Feet

By Samuel Francis

IN HIS INTRODUCTION to Thomas L. Jeffers's anthology of the best articles and essays of Norman Podhoretz, historian Paul Johnson writes that the former *Commentary* editor is "the archetype of the New York intellectual," a "polymath," "a great deal more than an editor," a "protean" intellect who is "a thinker and writer and polemicist, a geopolitician and student of religious ideas, an autobiographer of genius, a man who reacts sharply to the news as it pours from the press and the airwaves, who thinks deeply, angrily, and sincerely about it, and commits his thoughts into vivid and penetrating argument."

Yet Johnson's gushes can't match the gemlike sycophancy of the dust-jacket blurb offered by William F. Buckley Jr., who tells us, "Never (that I know) has a single lifetime borne such literary and philosophical fruit"—a statement that places Podhoretz somewhat higher than

such dimmer bulbs as Shakespeare, Dante, and Goethe. Jeffers chimes in with a rather more modest encomium that credits Podhoretz with "an intelligence as stunningly precocious, I think, as Mencken's or [Edmund] Wilson's had been two or three generations earlier," and he is astonished that in 1956 alone Podhoretz "wrote seven substantial pieces," followed by 13 in 1957, and nine in 1958—"which averages a piece every forty days or so." By this time the reader is fully expecting to find illustrations of Norman Podhoretz swimming the Yangtze River. In lieu of that, Johnson adds, "when you come to the end of a Podhoretz article and argument you feel you have got the real man, every time. There is no cant, nothing phony, no hidden agenda, nothing withheld, no tactical dodges, just the awkward or angular or disconcerting or simple truth, as he sees it. Here again, the comparison with Orwell springs to mind."

Orwell does in fact spring to mind, but not perhaps for quite the reasons Johnson suggests.

After wading through nearly 500 pages of what I found to be tedious prose on sometimes trivial subjects and people, I began to wonder if there wasn't something wrong with me. No doubt there is, but that still does not sway me from the conclusion there is not very much more to Norman Podhoretz than met my eye.

In his youth, Podhoretz was best known as a literary critic, and his reflections on such writers as Saul Bellow, Norman Mailer, and Philip Roth, embedded with his personal stories about them, are all reprinted here, along with a brief and unremarkable essay on *Huckleberry Finn*. To most Americans, if not to Podhoretz and his fans, such writers and their professional careers, personal quarrels, political opinions, and sexual peccadilloes are as remote as the struggles between the Greens and the Blues in the chariot races of ancient Byzantium.

Podhoretz is best known today as one of the architects of what is known as "neoconservatism," the man who, through his editorship of *Commentary* from 1960



"I need some medical advice.
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to 1995, developed the magazine into the flagship journal of the neoconservative movement, which has now come to dominate the American Right. His evolution into a neocon is perhaps the chief point of interest in this collection.

The main criticism of neoconservatism by the Old Right is that it is virtually indistinguishable from the liberalism that prevailed in American government and cultural life from the New Deal until today. So far from being conservatism of any recognizable stripe, neoconservatism merely displaces (and in fact helped muzzle) the real Right and

other than the humanitarian impulses in which their authors wrapped themselves, and that something is anti-Semitism.

That might be a more compelling charge if he even tried to show that the liberal and Left critics of Israel had ever expressed any other anti-Semitic views, but he doesn't, and it is inherently unlikely that writers like Mary McGrory, Hodding Carter, Nicholas von Hoffman, or Anthony Lewis are anti-Semites at all. Yet for Podhoretz, they are such by definition because anti-Semitism consists almost exclusively of criticism of Israel. He acquits Alexander Solzhenitsyn of

interests. His embrace of the profoundly anti-conservative Wilsonianism therefore not only suggests his own agenda but also shows how his neoconservatism merely regurgitates the premises and values of 20th-century liberalism.

Indeed, despite the hearty welcome most conservatives offered him, Podhoretz is entirely frank about how neo-conservatives did not share the beliefs or agendas of the Old Right and deliberately sought to undermine them. "The neo-conservatives," he modestly informs us, "brought something new to conservatism besides their own persons." They were "caught up in the process of shaping a perspective of their own that differed in important respects from the older varieties of American conservatism," an admission that rather gives the lie to younger neoconservatives today who purport that they are the real conservatives and the paleoconservatives are unpatriotic leftists.

He acknowledges that in contrast to the old conservatives, "the neo-conservatives dissociated themselves from the wholesale opposition to the welfare state which had marked American conservatism since the days of the New Deal" and that while neoconservatives supported "setting certain limits" to the welfare state, those limits did not involve "issues of principle, such as the legitimate size and role of the central government in the American constitutional order" but were to be "determined by practical considerations."

By far the most brazen claim Podhoretz makes is that the Old Right never existed as a serious intellectual force. "It was the neo-conservatives who decided that the time had come to drag capitalism out of the closet," he assures us, citing two books of the late 1970s by Irving Kristol and Michael Novak. So much for Ludwig von Mises, Nobel Prize winners Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman, Murray Rothbard, Henry Hazlitt, and Ayn Rand, among others, not one of whom was a neoconservative and all of whom "dragged capitalism out of the closet" decades before the neoconservatives had shed their pink diapers.

PODHORETZ IS ENTIRELY FRANK ABOUT HOW **NEOCONSERVATIVES DID NOT SHARE THE BELIEFS OF THE OLD RIGHT AND DELIBERATELY SOUGHT TO UNDERMINE THEM.**

perpetuates the liberal monopoly on political and cultural discourse. There is little in Podhoretz's account of his intellectual and political development to challenge that interpretation.

The selection from *Breaking Ranks*, Podhoretz's 1979 memoir of his political transition, is a case in point. Nowhere does he offer any deep or serious critique of liberalism or suggest that the anti-Americanism and blindness to Communism it has always harbored may be an inherent part of it, and nowhere does he offer an alternative worldview. In *Breaking Ranks* he was content to affirm, "the label I usually use when I am forced to use one at all is 'centrist' or 'centrist liberal.'" "Neoconservatism," as Podhoretz conceives it, is merely a more "moderate" or "pragmatic" version of liberalism.

A major subtext to his political metamorphosis, of course, was the view of Israel and Zionism the Left espoused, but that is only slightly apparent from the selections Jeffers offers. It pops up in Podhoretz's famous 1982 essay "J'Accuse," in which he examines liberal attacks on Israel after its invasion of Lebanon and finds them without factual merit. His inference is that the attacks must have been driven by something

anti-Semitism simply because he "has always defended Israel," while "in our own day, Israel has become the touchstone of attitudes toward the Jewish people, and anti-Zionism has become the main and most relevant form of anti-Semitism." There you have it: if you criticize Israeli policy, you hate Jews.

His defense of the Vietnam War on the grounds of Wilsonian moralism may also be suspected of containing much the same subtext. "For the truth was," he writes, "that the United States went into Vietnam for the sake not of its own direct interests in the ordinary sense but for the sake of an ideal. The intervention was a product of the Wilsonian side of the American character—the side that went to war in 1917 to 'make the world safe for democracy' and that found its contemporary incarnations in the liberal internationalism of the 1940s and the liberal anti-Communism of the 1950s." This explanation, it must be understood, is Podhoretz's defense of the war, not, as most conservatives would regard it, a critique.

Wilsonianism relies on abstract moral sentiment, and it is therefore highly useful in defending U.S. involvement in wars that are not really in our national interests and allies that are, if not indefensible in themselves, at least irrelevant to such

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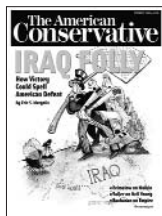
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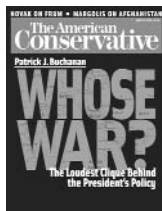
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It was also the neoconservatives, Podhoretz writes, who taught the older conservatives to embrace the civil-rights movement because only by appealing to Martin Luther King's "dream of a world in which all would be judged not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character" could they reject the racial discrimination of affirmative action. But the mainstream Right opposed affirmative action from its beginnings, and resistance to it has nothing to do with accepting the civil-rights movement, of which affirmative action is a direct outgrowth that King explicitly defended and advocated.

As for anti-Communism, here too Podhoretz claims the neoconservatives "enjoyed a great advantage over other conservatives in being thoroughly familiar with the sources of the enemy's arguments and attitudes," though in *Breaking Ranks* he acknowledges such ex-communists of the Old Right as James Burnham, Will Herberg, and Whittaker Chambers, to mention only a few who were somewhat familiar with Marxist ideology and tactics themselves. Nor is he correct that it was the neoconservatives "who led the attack" on the Nixon-Kissinger policy of détente. Both *National Review* and other Old Right journals in the 1970s were filled with rejections of détente and criticisms of Nixon and Kissinger. It is impossible to believe Podhoretz does not know all this.

He must also know that long before neoconservatism emerged in the 1960s, what is usually called the "conservative intellectual movement" had been flourishing for two decades. Not only the free-market theorists and anti-communists mentioned above but also political thinkers, cultural critics, and social theorists like Burnham, Robert Nisbet, Richard Weaver, Willmoore Kendall, Russell Kirk, Frank S. Meyer, and a number of European expatriates of the Right preceded neoconservatism by a generation. Not everything these writers wrote was correct, and what they believed was not always consistent, but taken as a whole they constituted a sig-

nificant contribution to American intellectual life and political thought and offered a far deeper and more searching critique of liberalism and its leftist progeny than anything Podhoretz or any other neoconservative has offered to this day. Podhoretz and his comrades not only sneer at the Old Right but are determined to rewrite history to erase any memory of it.

While Podhoretz claims in a 1995 essay that the "purpose" of the neoconservative movement "is to dismantle the structures created by the liberal revolution of the past fifty years" (i.e., back to 1945; he has no problem with the New Deal and its revolution in domestic and foreign policy), nowhere does he suggest the abolition of a single government agency, the reversal of a single Supreme Court ruling, or the repeal of a single piece of liberal legislation. What Podhoretz and neoconservatism seek has nothing to do with the conservation or restoration of the Old Republic or dismantling much of anything except the real Right itself. Its purpose is the preservation and continuing hegemony of the liberal regime and its ideology, because in the neoconservative perception only if that hegemony remains intact can Israeli and Jewish ethno-political interests be secure.

Sadly, after reading this anthology I am unable to identify any body of learning or serious thought that distinguishes the author and his ephemera. Success, the bitch goddess of his first book, *Making It*, and the money, power, and status that attend it, seem to occupy an immense amount of acreage in the Podhoretzian psyche and a disproportionate share of attention in what Mr. Buckley calls its "literary and philosophical fruit." There is no question that Norman Podhoretz "made it," but it's hard to believe the basket of fruit he leaves behind him will not quickly wither. ■

Samuel Francis is a nationally syndicated columnist based in Washington and writes a monthly column for Chronicles.

An Edsel, Not an Empire



The Edsel name became synonymous with failure back in 1957, when the Ford Motor Company launched a “new concept” of a car named after the

then chairman’s father, Edsel Ford. It bombed like no car has before or since. In 1999, Tina Brown, in cahoots with the disgusting Harvey Weinstein, launched *Talk* magazine with a million-buck grand-opening extravaganza on some island off Manhattan. *Talk* became an Edsel in no time, with Weinstein shutting it down after only one year. Both the Edsel and *Talk* used Madison Avenue hucksterisms to stir up excitement before the final product appeared. Both proved the old adage about fooling all the people all of the time to be correct. Mind you, Detroit has been lying to Americans since the first horseless buggy. Compared to European and Japanese cars, American ones are unsafe and expensive to run. It took a Lebanese-American to expose the lies with *Unsafe at Any Speed* almost 40 years ago, but still Detroit lies and covers up.

Which brings me to the Bush presidency: it looks like an Edsel—brilliant presentation followed by total failure. But it’s doing its best to cover up the mess. As Patrick Foy wrote in his newsletter, “Call it what you will, but Washington is hitting the wall in Iraq.” If only those Fifth Columnists who advised George W. Bush to go in head first would read history rather than policy papers.

Back in 1920, Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill, fresh from overseeing the debacle of Gallipoli, was hard at work implementing the Balfour Declaration and creating client states for England. We are now paying the price for Churchill’s criminal shortsightedness. The neocons may lack Churchill’s breeding, but they are just as arrogant, shortsighted, and cynical as old Winnie. (He at least had the excuse of his father’s

syphilis.) Here’s Margaret MacMillan in her opus, *Paris 1919*: “When the Cold War ended in 1989 and Soviet Marxism vanished into the dustbin of history, older forces, religion and nationalism, came out of their deep freeze. Bosnia and Rwanda have reminded us of how strong those forces can be. Today, some argue, resurgent Islam is the menace. In 1919, it was Russian Bolshevism.”

I guarantee you that resurgent Islam will also vanish into the dustbin of history as long as Uncle Sam minds his own business and stays out of the backyards of people who wear towels on their heads. If the Saudi kleptocrats wish to finance Islamofascists to preach death and destruction to infidels, let them—as long as they don’t do it in Michigan. As my friend (I am the godfather of one of his children), the brilliant historian Niall Ferguson, writes in *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire*, Americans won’t admit to being an empire, as the U.S. only came into being by violently seceding from someone else’s empire. But, like it or not, we are becoming a sort of empire, if only because we exercise a hegemonic influence both culturally and economically the world over. This is fine, as long as we don’t muck around in the affairs of other countries.

Patrick Buchanan has said it time and again, we are a republic, not an empire, and we should behave as such. If only George W. Bush had read Lawrence of Arabia, rather than Wolfowitz of Mesopotamia, he would have known that Lawrence recruited many a man to fight against the Turks, all of whom eventually turned against the Brits once the hated Johnny Turk had been sent pack-

ing back to Istanbul. That history repeats itself is a cliché, but a hell of a good one.

Britain’s empire lasted a long time because nation-building back then required time and patience, something the American electorate will not put up with. The Brits sent generations of civil administrators overseas, generations who went native and stayed native. Ferguson reports that out of 43,683 undergraduate registrations at Yale in 2004, only one student majored in Near Eastern languages. How does one infiltrate an Islamist cell when one speaks only English and can’t live without McDonald’s for more than a week?

Not that these details ever bothered those who helped launch this disaster. Remember the Iron Chancellor’s famous remark that the Balkans were not worth the life of a single Pomeranian grenadier? Well, Iraq is not worth the life of a single American soldier, especially an American Marine.

Saddam was a threat to Iraq, not to Uncle Sam. Not even to Israel, as it turns out, but try to say this to the Israeli Lobby. As Frank Johnson wrote in the London *Spectator*, the neocons have been making mischief for more than a hundred years. He compares the present motley cabal of Wolfowitzes and Feiths to Lord Milner, the governor of the British Cape Colony in South Africa. Johnson writes, “Milner’s Iraq was the Boer republic of Transvaal.” He set out to convince the prime minister, Lord Salisbury, that the Boers were a threat to Britain, as ludicrous a claim as the WMD hoax a century later. It would be a cakewalk, or a slam-dunk, according to Milner. Over 22,000 British dead and three years later, Salisbury found out what neocon really means. Now it’s Bush’s turn. Unless he cleans house, his will be the Edsel presidency. ■

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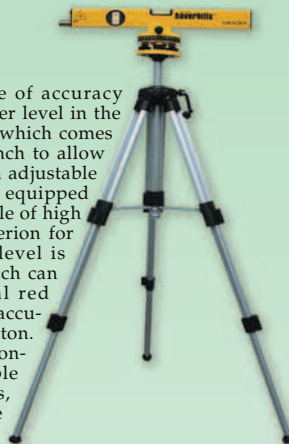
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